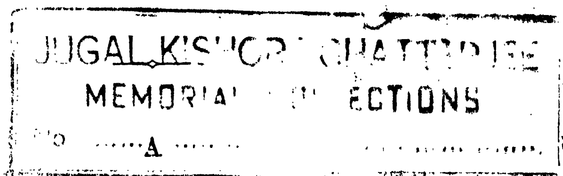
A MANUAL OF ETHICS.

The University Tutorial Series.



A MANUAL OF ETHICS

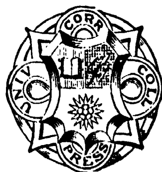
DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF STUDENTS.

BY

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SECOND EDITION.



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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THIS handbook is intended primarily for the use of private students, and especially for those who are preparing for such examinations in Ethics as those conducted by the University of London. It is hoped, however, that it will be found useful also by other classes of readers. Its design is to give, in brief compass, an outline of the most important principles of ethical doctrine, so far as these can be understood without a knowledge of Metaphysics[1]; and to show how these doctrines may be applied to the practical guidance of life. In carrying out this design, I have made no pretence of setting forth theories which are generally accepted. There is no generally accepted theory of Ethics; and I have thought that it would be more profitable for students that I should frankly expound the outlines of the theory which commends itself to my own mind rather than present a jumble of conflicting opinions. At the same time, I have tried to indicate the general position of the chief contending schools of Ethics, and to show that the divergence between them is not so great as is sometimes supposed. For a fuller account of these schools readers must be referred to works dealing with the history of the subject. I could wish that every one who takes up the study of this book should use Professor Sidgwick's *History of Ethics* along with it.

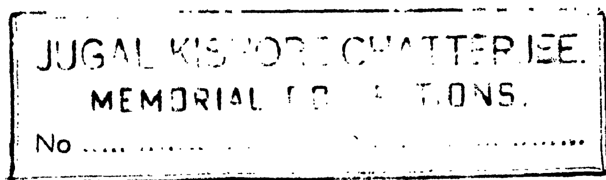
The point of view adopted in this Manual is that of the school of Idealism—*i. e.* the school founded by Kant and developed by Hegel, Green, and others. In this respect the present Text-book is similar to two other recent treatises —Dewey's *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics*, and

[1] I must confess that this condition has been a source of much trouble to me, and I can hardly hope that it has been fully satisfied. Ethics cannot be fully understood without Metaphysics; and in the attempt to make it intelligible without such a basis, I am conscious that I have frequently been led to make use of inadequate methods of statement. But the more metaphysical student will be able to modify these for himself. The great practical importance of the science of Ethics is perhaps a sufficient excuse for an effort to make it partly intelligible even to those who are unacquainted with Metaphysics.

Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*. If these books had been published before this one was arranged for, it is probable that it would never have been undertaken. As it is, I can only plead that the subject is handled in this work in a way slightly different from that in which it is taken up by either of the other two, and that it may consequently in some respects satisfy a want which neither of them fully meets. I hope, however, that readers of my book will, as far as possible, consult the other two also. Where there is a general harmony of point of view, a comparison of the methods of treatment adopted by different writers on points of detail is often of the greatest value to the student. I think it would be especially useful for readers of this book, who have time to spare, to compare it in this way with Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*. The latter work is designed for a slightly different purpose; and at many points it will be found to supply a very useful supplement to the present treatise by presenting the same general ideas in a somewhat different light. For the convenience of students who may use it in this way, I have inserted frequent references to Mr. Muirhead's book, and have indicated the main points of divergence.

My obligations to the masters of the science are sufficiently obvious, and need not be specially acknowledged. In particular, how much I owe to Professor Edward Caird will probably be evident to every one who is familiar with his writings and teaching. I must, however, make some more particular acknowledgment of the great assistance I have received from others while the book was passing through the press. My friend, Mr. James Welton, of the Yorkshire College, Leeds, has read all the proofs with great care, and has suggested numerous improvements, some of them of considerable extent and importance. On the greater part of the proofs, and especially in the concluding chapters, I have also had the benefit of some very valuable criticisms from Miss M. S. Gilliland, of the London Ethical Society. The Index at the end is almost entirely due to Professor Holman, of University College, Aberystwyth.

Manchester,
November 1892.



PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In issuing a second edition of this Manual after an interval of about a year from its first appearance, I have not found it possible to make any radical changes in the treatment, though I am fully conscious of many points at which improvements might be desirable. I have contented myself with a few minor changes, and with the addition of six notes at the end, chiefly with the view of obviating possible misunderstandings. In making these changes I have been much helped by suggestions contained in some criticisms of the first edition that have appeared in various publications. I may refer, in particular, to the criticisms in the *International Journal of Ethics* by Mr. G. F. Stout and Mr. D. G. Ritchie, to the criticism in *Mind* by Mr. J. H. Muirhead, and to an anonymous review in the *Manchester Guardian*. I have also received valuable assistance from Mr. W. T. Kenwood, who has corrected a number of inaccuracies and inelegancies of expression, and suggested various other improvements; and I have again to thank Miss Gilliland and Mr. Welton for many useful hints.

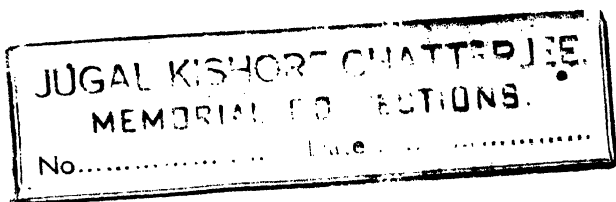
I may take this opportunity of stating that, in my opinion, the student who is reading this book for the first time would do well to omit the Notes both at the end of the book and at the ends of the various chapters. The Note at the end of Chapter IV. will probably be found especially difficult by the beginner. It should also be mentioned that the whole of

Part II. is less important than Part I., being in the main merely a series of illustrations of the way in which ethical theory may be applied. Some readers may find it desirable to omit Chaps. XIII., XVI., and XVII., at least on a first reading.

In referring to other books, I have endeavoured, as far as possible, to use the latest editions. I ought to mention, however, that in the case of Mr. Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, the references are to the first edition. I understand that a second edition of that useful work, considerably altered and enlarged, is now passing through the press. A new edition of Professor Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics* has also been announced.

The Index at the end, it should be observed, does not contain references to anything in either of the two Appendices.

Trinity College, Cambridge,
January, 1894.



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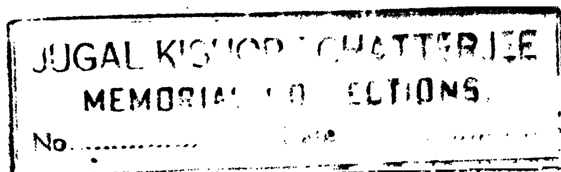
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PART I.

THE THEORY OF MORALS.



ETHICS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCOPE OF ETHICS.

"Gedenke zu leben."[1]—GOETHE.

§ 1. DEFINITION. *The Science of the Ultimate End of Life.*—Ethics is the science of Conduct. It considers the actions of human beings with reference to their rightness or wrongness, their tendency to good or to evil. The name "Ethics" is derived from the Greek τὰ ἠθικά. This again comes from ἦθος, meaning character; and this is connected with ἔθος, custom or habit. Similarly, the term "Moral Philosophy," which means the same thing as Ethics, is derived from the Latin *mores*, meaning habits or customs. Ethics, then, we may say, discusses men's habits and customs, or in other words their characters, the principles on which they habitually act, and considers what it is that constitutes the rightness or wrongness of these principles, the good or evil of these habits. These terms, however, "Right" and "Good," seem to require a little explanation.

(*a*) *Right.* The term "Right" is derived from the Latin *rectus*, meaning "straight" or "according to rule." The

[1] ("Think of living.")

Greek word corresponding to it is δίκαιος, which also meant originally "according to rule." When we say, then, that conduct is right, we mean primarily that it is according to rule. Rules, however, have reference to some result to be achieved by them; and it is this fact that is indicated by the second term, "Good."

(*b*) *Good*. The term "Good" is connected with the German *gut*, and contains the same root as the Greek ἀγαθός. A thing is said to be good when it is valuable for some end. Thus, particular kinds of medicine are said to be good for this or that complaint. Similarly, when we speak of conduct as good, we mean that it is serviceable for the end we have in view.[1]

Thus, when we say that the science of Ethics is concerned with the rightness or goodness of human conduct, we mean that it is concerned with the consideration of the serviceableness of our conduct for some end at which we aim, and with the rules by which our conduct is to be directed in order that this end may be attained. But if we are to consider the serviceableness of our actions to an end, and the rules by which this end is to be attained, it is evident that we must have some understanding of the nature of the end itself. Now there are many ends to which our actions may be directed, *e. g.* the building of a house, the writing of a book, the passing of an examination, and so on. But since Ethics is the science of Conduct as a whole, and not of any particular kinds of Conduct, it is not any of these special ends that it sets itself to consider, but the supreme

[1] *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 63. Also, Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, chap. iii. It should be carefully observed, however, that the term "good" is also used (perhaps even more frequently) to signify not something which is a *means* to an end, but something which is itself taken as an end. Thus the *summum bonum*, or supreme good, means the supreme end at which we aim.

or ultimate end to which our whole lives are directed. This end is commonly referred to as the *Summum Bonum* or Supreme Good.[1] If, then, Ethics is to be a strictly exact science, we must presuppose that there is such a supreme end. If there is no definite end at which we are to aim, it is impossible to consider the serviceableness of actions with reference to it, or the rules by which we are to be guided in pursuit of it.

Now this presupposition of a supreme end might seem at first to be unjustifiable. Men aim at various objects. Some desire wealth; others, independence; others, power. Some are eager for fame; others, for knowledge; others, for love; and some again find their highest good in loving and serving others.[2] Some are fond of excitement; others, of peace. Some fill their lives with many-sided interests—art and science, and the development of social and political institutions; others are tempted to regard all these as vanity, and sometimes even, turning from them all in disgust, to believe that the best thing of all would be to die and be at rest;[3] while others again fix their highest hopes on a life beyond death, to be perfected in a better world than this. But a little consideration serves to show that many of these ends cannot be regarded as ultimate. If, for instance, we were to question those who are seeking for wealth or

[1] See preceding note.

[2] "This is shown by the delight that mothers take in loving; for some give their children to others to rear, and love them since they know them, but do not look for love in return, if it be impossible to have both, being content to see their children doing well, and loving them, though they receive from them, in their ignorance, nothing of what is due to a mother."—Aristotle's *Ethics*, VIII. viii. 3.

[3] See, for instance, Shakspere's Sonnet LXVI.—"Tired with all these, for restful death I cry," &c., and *cf.* Byron and the modern Pessimists *passim*.

independence or power, we should generally find that they would explain their desire for these objects by enumerating the advantages which the attainment of the desired objects would bring. The possibility of such an explanation proves that these objects are not regarded as *ultimate* ends by those who pursue them, but are desired for the sake of something else. The more we reflect on the matter, the more reason shall we find for believing that all ends, except one, are of this subordinate character, being all in reality merely means for the attainment of that one supreme end. If this were not the case, the science of Ethics would be very complicated and indefinite—if, indeed, it could be reduced to a science at all. It may be, indeed, that the ultimate end of human life may turn out to be a complicated end, including a variety of elements. But if we are to have definite rules of conduct founded on it, it must at least be an end that is capable of being regarded as a single whole.

The full justification of this presupposition, however, can be found only in the course of the science itself. In the meantime, we must content ourselves with the assumption that the science is possible, and with the definition of it as *the science of the ultimate end or ideal of human life.*[1]

§ 2. THE NATURE OF ETHICS. *It is a Normative Science.*—The fact that Ethics is concerned with an end or ideal serves at once to distinguish it from most other sciences. Most sciences are concerned with certain uniformities of our experience—with the ways in which certain classes of objects (such as rocks or plants) are found to exist, or with the ways in which certain classes of events (such as the

[1] On the general nature of the science of Ethics, the reader may consult Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, Chap. I.; Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, Book I.; Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, Introduction; and Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book I., Chap. I.

phenomena of sound or electricity) are found to occur. Such sciences have no direct reference to any end that is to be achieved. The knowledge which they communicate may, indeed, be useful for certain purposes. A knowledge about rocks is useful for those who wish to build houses or to sink mines. A knowledge about electricity is useful for those who wish to protect their buildings or to form telegraphic communications. But the truth of the sciences that deal with such subjects as these is in no way affected by the ends which they may thus be made to subserve. Knowledge about the nebulæ is as much a part of the science of astronomy as knowledge about the solar system, though the latter can be directly turned to account in the art of navigation, while the former has no direct practical utility. The science of Ethics, then, is distinguished from the natural sciences, inasmuch as it has a direct reference to an end that we desire to attain.

It is not by any means the only science, however, which has such a reference. On the contrary, there is a whole class of sciences of this character. These may be called the *normative* sciences—*i. e.* the sciences that lay down rules or laws. Of this kind are the science of medicine, which deals with the rules to be observed for the attainment of health, or for the avoidance and removal of disease; the science of architecture, which deals with the rules to be observed in the construction of buildings, with a view to their stability, convenience, and beauty; the science of navigation, which deals with the rules to be observed in the management of ships; the science of rhetoric, which deals with the rules of persuasiveness and beauty of style; the science of logic, which deals with the rules of correct thinking. Most of these sciences are of a mixed character, being partly concerned with the analysis of facts, and partly

with the statement of rules to be observed for the attainment of certain ends. Thus the science of medicine deals with the facts of disease as well as with the rules of health, and the science of architecture discusses the ways in which buildings have been constructed at various periods of man's history, as well as the ways in which it is most desirable that buildings should be constructed. Sometimes, indeed, these two sides of a science are so evenly balanced, that it is difficult to say whether it ought properly to be regarded as a natural or a normative science. This is notably the case with regard to political economy. But in all such cases it is possible to separate the two sides of the science, and to consider them as forming in reality two distinct, though closely connected, sciences.

In the case of Ethics, the normative side is by far the more important; but the other side is not entirely absent. There are ethical facts as well as ethical laws. Thus the ideas of the Thugs, who are said to regard murder as a supreme duty, constitute an important fact in the moral life of a certain section of mankind; but no scientific code of ethics is ever likely to prescribe such a duty, any more than a system of medicine is likely to prescribe extensive indulgence in alcohol or tight lacing. This is no doubt a somewhat extreme case; but there are in every community certain peculiarities of the moral sense which are in reality quite analogous. Thus, much of the conduct which is regarded as fine and noble in a modern Englishman, would probably have seemed almost unintelligible to a cultivated Athenian or to a devout Jew in the ancient world; and much of the conduct that one of the latter would have praised, would seem to the modern Englishman to lack delicacy or humanity. Now, some of the differences which occur in the ethical codes of different peoples are not without meaning even

for the framer of a scientific code of duty. The rational moralist would not prescribe quite the same conduct under all conditions of life, any more than the rational physician would prescribe the same regimen to an inhabitant of Canada as to an inhabitant of India. Different circumstances bring different obligations; and in the general progress of history, there is a progress in the nature of the duties that are imposed on men. As Lowell says—

> "New occasions teach new duties:
> Time makes ancient good uncouth."

Even the strictest of moralists, therefore, might admit differences in ethical codes at different times and places. But the differences which we actually find are not all of this nature. No system of medicine would commend opium and crushed feet; and no system of ethics would regard with equal approval the Code of Honour, the Ten Commandments, and the Sermon on the Mount. But all these are *ethical facts*, and have an equal right to be chronicled as such, though they have not an equal right to be approved. There is a marked difference, therefore, between the science which deals with the *facts* of the moral life and that which deals with the *rules* of the moral life. The former science is a part of that wider science which deals with the general structure of societies—the science which is usually known as Sociology. The latter science, on the other hand, is that to which the name of Ethics is more strictly appropriated; and it is with it alone that we shall be concerned in the present work. The former is a natural science; the latter is a normative science. But, of course, in dealing with the latter, we can scarcely avoid touching on the former.

§ **3**. SCIENCE AND ART. *A Normative Science is midway between them.*—In the case of every normative science, the

question is apt to present itself, whether we are really concerned with a science at all or rather with an art. And the answer seems to be, that if we insist on drawing an absolute distinction between a science and an art, a normative science must be regarded as lying midway between them. A science, it is said, teaches us *to know*, and an art *to do*;[1] but a normative science teaches us *to know how to do.* Since, however, such a science is primarily concerned with the communication of knowledge, it is more properly to be described as a science than as an art; but it is a kind of science that has a very direct relation to a corresponding art. There is scarcely any art that is not indirectly related to a great number of different sciences. The art of painting, for instance, may derive useful lessons from the sciences of optics, anatomy, botany, geology, and a great variety of others. The art of navigation, in like manner, is much aided by the sciences of astronomy, magnetism, acoustics, hydrostatics, and many more. But such relationships are comparatively indirect. The dependence of an art upon its corresponding normative science is of a very much closer character. The art of rhetoric is a direct application of the science of rhetoric; and the art of fencing, of the science of fencing. Indeed, if a normative science could be completely worked out into all its details, the art corresponding to it would contain nothing which is not included in the science. Perhaps this is the case with such an art as that of fencing. Still, even here the science and the art are clearly distinguishable. A man may be quite familiar with the science, and yet not be skilled in the art; and *vice versâ.* But in most cases the distinction is even more marked than this: for the art usually includes a great

[1] *Cf.* Jevons's *Elementary Logic*, p. 7; Welton's *Manual of Logic*, vol. i. p. 18; Mill's *Logic*, Introduction.

deal that we are not able to reduce to science at all. Indeed, some arts are so entirely dependent on the possession of a peculiar knack or dexterity, or of a peculiar kind of genius, that they can scarcely be said to have any science corresponding to them at all. Thus, for example, there is no science of cookery, there is no science of sleight-of-hand, there is no science of making jokes, and there is no science of poetry.

Now morality is undoubtedly, in a sense, a fine art,[1] requiring as rare gifts for its perfection as any of the others. The genius of a great moral reformer, a Confucius or a Christ, is not less wonderful than that of a Shakspere or a Beethoven; and no science can be expected fully to explain the former, any more than the latter. To hit the right act in complicated cases requires as finely cultivated a tact as it does to hit the right word or sound. It may pretty safely be asserted that no man who was eminent for moral power ever understood completely the significance of his own acts.[2] Still less was any good man ever able to explain all the steps of the process by which he was led to act as he does. The art of good conduct, and the art of the production of good conduct, both defy science. The moral genius acts nobly; and the prophetic genius moves men to noble activity: and probably no one can tell how it is that the actions of the one fall out so beautifully, or that the words of the other rouse us to virtue like the sound of a trumpet. Christ lived: Paul and Ruskin preached. In these facts the art of Ethics is involved, and no science can cope with them. Nevertheless, a science of Ethics is

[1] *Cf.* the interesting book by N. P. Gilman entitled *Conduct as a Fine Art*. See also Appendix B, Note I.

[2] *Cf.* the saying of Cromwell, "A man never goes so far as when he does not know where he is going."

possible. It is possible to lay down broad general laws, which must underlie the teaching of every true prophet and the conduct of every true moral genius.

§ 4. THE MEANING OF LAW. *Different senses of the term.* We have said that the science of Ethics lays down laws or rules. Now there is a certain ambiguity in the word "law."[1] It has been customary to distinguish two distinct senses in which it may be used. We speak of the laws of a country and also of the laws of nature; but it is evident that the kinds of laws referred to in these two phrases are very different. The laws of a country are made by a people or by its rulers; and, even in the case of the Medes and Persians, there is always a possibility that they may be changed. There is also always a possibility that the inhabitants of the country may disobey them; and, as a general rule, they have no application at all to the inhabitants of other countries. The laws of nature,[2] on the other hand, are constant, inviolable, and all-pervading. There are three respects, therefore, in which different kinds of laws may be distinguished. Some laws are constant: others are variable. Some are inviolable: others are liable to be disobeyed. Some are universal: others have only a limited application. The last of these three points, however, is scarcely distinguishable from the first: for what is universal is generally also constant and necessary, and *vice versâ*. Consequently, it may be sufficient at first to distinguish different kinds of laws as (1) changeable or unchangeable, (2) violable or inviolable—though we shall have to return shortly to the third principle of distinction. Adopting these two principles,

[1] *Cf.* Whately's *Logic*, p. 209; and Welton's *Logic*, vol. i., p. 14.

[2] I mean such laws as those that are stated in treatises on theoretical mechanics. These laws relate to tendencies that are operative throughout the whole of nature. See following note.

we might evidently have four different classes of laws—(1) Those that can be both changed and violated, (2) those that can be changed but cannot be violated, (3) those that can be violated but cannot be changed, (4) those that can neither be changed nor violated.

Of the first and last of these, illustrations have already been given. Of the second also it is not difficult to discover examples. The laws of the solar system, of day and night, seedtime and harvest, and all the vicissitudes of the seasons, are inviolable so long as certain conditions last; but if these conditions were changed—say, by the cooling of the sun, by the retardation of the earth's velocity, or its collision with some comet or erratic meteor—the laws also would change with them.[1] Again, most of the laws of political economy are of this character. They hold good of certain types of society, and among men who are swayed by certain motives; and within these limits they are inviolable. But change the conditions of society, or the characters of the men who compose it, and in many cases the laws will break down. Such laws are sometimes said to be *hypothetical*. They are valid only on the *supposition* that certain conditions are present and remain unchanged. Some philosophers[2] have thought that even the laws of mathematics may be of this character—that there might be a world in which two and two would be equal to five; and that if a triangle were formed with the diameter of the earth for its base and one of the fixed stars for its apex, its three angles might not be

[1] It might be urged that *all* laws of nature are of this character, *i. e.* that they are all hypothetical, depending on the continuance of the present constitution of the universe. This is true, unless there are some laws of such a kind that no system of nature could exist without them. The consideration of this question, however, belongs to Metaphysics.

[2] *E.g.* J. S. Mill.

equal to two right angles.[1] But this appears to be a mistake. The laws of mathematics belong rather to the last of our four classes.

The laws of Ethics, however, must on the whole be regarded as belonging to the third class. They cannot be changed, but they may be violated. It is true, as has been already stated, that the particular rules of morals may vary with different conditions of life; but the broad principles remain always the same, and are applicable not only to all kinds of men, but to all rational beings. If a spirit were to come among us from another world, we might have no knowledge of his nature and constitution. We might not know what would taste bitter or sweet to him, what he would judge to be hard or soft, or how he would be affected by heat or sound or colour. But we should know at least that for him, as for us, the whole is greater than any one of its parts, and every event has a cause; and that he, like us, must not tell lies, and must not wantonly destroy life.[2] These laws are unchangeable. They can, however, be broken. We may, indeed, speak of ethical principles which it is impossible to violate. An ethical writer, for instance, may insist on the truth that every sin brings with it some form of punishment. This is a truth from which there is no escape; but it is rather a metaphysical than an ethical truth. It is a fact about the constitution of the world, not a moral law. A moral law states something that *ought* to happen, not something that *must* happen.

Moral laws are not the only laws that are of this character.

[1] This was the opinion of Gauss, for instance.

[2] Some theological writers have denied this, holding that goodness in God may be something entirely different from goodness in man. This opinion is ably refuted by Mill in his *Examination of Hamilton*, chap. vii.

On the contrary, the laws of every strictly normative science are essentially similar. No one can make the fundamental principles of architecture, navigation, or rhetoric, in any way different from what they are; though in practice any one who is willing to take the consequences may defy them. No doubt the rules of these sciences might require modification if they were to be applied to the inhabitants of another planet than ours; and even on our own planet they are not absolutely rigid. A style of building which is suitable for Iceland would scarcely be adapted for the Tropics. The navigation of the Mississippi is different from that of the Atlantic. And the oratory which would awake the enthusiasm of an Oriental people might move an Anglo-Saxon audience only to derision. Still, it is possible in all these sciences to lay down broad general laws which shall be applicable universally, or at least applicable to all conditions under which it is conceivable that we should wish to apply them—laws, indeed, from which even the particular modifications required in special cases might be deduced. For example, we might take it as a principle of rhetoric that if an audience is to be moved to the performance of some action or the acceptance of some truth to which they may be expected to be disinclined, they ought to be led up to the point by an easy transition, from step to step, beginning with some things that are obvious and familiar, and in which their affections are naturally engaged. From this it might be at once inferred that the character of such an appeal ought to vary with different audiences, according to the nature of the objects to which their experience has accustomed them, to the intensity of the feelings which have connected themselves with these objects, and to the average rapidity of their intellects in passing from one point to another. The law is constant: it is only the application

that varies. The science of logic gives us a still more obvious instance of such laws. The rules of correct thinking cannot be changed, though the particular errors to which men are most liable may vary with different objects of study, different languages, and different habits of mind. In this case also, as in Ethics, the laws cannot be changed,[1] but may be violated. They are, in short, *commands* or *imperatives*.

§ **5.** COMMANDS. *Hypothetical and Categorical.*—What has been said in the last paragraph may be summed up in this way. Laws are of two kinds—uniformities and commands. Each of these kinds, again, is of two varieties—constant or necessary, and changeable. We saw, however, that there is also another respect in which it is possible to distinguish different kinds of laws. We may ask whether they are or are not universal in their application. We omitted this point, in the general consideration of different kinds of laws, because it is somewhat difficult—especially in the case of uniformities, as distinguished from commands—to draw a distinction between what is constant or necessary and what is universal. Now, however, this further point must be introduced; because, in the case of commands, the difference is of some importance. A command may be constant or necessary, and yet not universal in its application. Thus the fundamental principles of rhetoric are constant; but the commands which are thus laid down are applicable only to rhetoricians. The laws of architecture, in like manner,

[1] It may be urged, no doubt, that some at least of the laws of logic are applicable only within certain hypothetical limits. Some of them, for instance (*viz.* those commonly discussed under the head of Formal Logic), depend on the admission of the principles of identity, contradiction, and excluded middle; and it may be maintained that there are objects to which these principles are not strictly applicable. But this point is too subtle to be more than merely hinted at in this place.

apply only to those who wish to construct stable, commodious, and beautiful buildings. Some of the laws of political economy, again, are neither constant nor universal. They are not constant; for they may vary with different conditions of society. They are not universal; for they are applicable only to those who wish to produce wealth. Even the laws of formal logic are not universal. They apply only to those who wish to be self-consistent. Now a man may reject this aim. He may say, with Emerson,[1] "Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then?". "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do."[2] Such imperatives as these, therefore, are merely hypothetical.[3] They apply only to those who adopt the end with which the particular normative science is concerned.

The laws of Ethics differ from all other laws in being not hypothetical, but categorical. It is true that Emerson's paradox about consistency has been capped by that of the preacher who bade us, "Be not righteous overmuch."[4] But if this maxim is to have any intelligible meaning, we must understand the term "righteous" in a somewhat narrow sense. It cannot be taken to mean that we should not, to

[1] Essay on "Self-Reliance."

[2] I assume of course here that logic is to be regarded as a normative science, laying down the rules of consistent thought. Some logicians have treated the subject in a different way, regarding it either as an ordinary natural science, or as an art, or as a combination of the two.

[3] Such laws as those of political economy are thus hypothetical in a double sense—hypothetical with regard to the conditions under which they are applicable, and hypothetical with regard to the end with reference to which they are applicable.

[4] *Cf.* Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, p. 418. "'Be good if you would be happy,' seems to be the verdict even of worldly prudence; but it adds in an emphatic aside, 'Be not too good.'"

too great an extent, do what we ought to do. This would be a contradiction in terms. If we are not to be too fanatical in the observance of particular moral rules, it must be in deference to other moral rules that are of a still higher authority. The supreme moral principle, whatever it may be, lays its command upon us absolutely, and admits of no question. What we *ought* to do we ought to *do*. There can be no higher law by which the moral imperative might be set aside.

There are, indeed, some other laws which might seem to be scarcely less absolute, because they relate to ends that every one naturally seeks. Thus, every one would like to be happy; and consequently if there were any science of happiness, every one would be bound to follow its laws. Accordingly, Kant called such laws *assertorial*,[1] because although they depend on the hypothesis that we seek for happiness, yet it may be at once *asserted* of every one that he does seek this end. Again, intellectual perfection is an end which a rational being can hardly help desiring. There is probably no one who would not, if he could, have the penetration of a Newton, or the grasp of a Shakspere or a Goethe. Hence if there were any science that taught how such perfection is to be attained, its laws would have at least an almost universal application. Still, even such laws as these are not quite parallel to the laws of morals. Their universality, if they are universal, depends on the fact that every one chooses the end to which they have reference; whereas the laws of morals apply to all men irrespective of their choice. If, indeed, happiness could be shown to be necessarily bound up with virtue, and unhappiness with vice, then the obligation to follow the rules of happiness would have the same absoluteness as the obligation to obey the

[1] *Metaphysic of Morals*, section II.

moral law; but only because these two things would then be identical. In like manner, if we were to accept quite literally the view of Carlyle, that all intellectual perfection has a moral root, so that a man's virtue is exactly proportional to his intelligence, in this case also the laws of intellectual perfection would become absolute, but only because they would become moral. The moral law, then, is unique. It is the only categorical imperative.[1] We have not yet asked, however, what the nature of this imperative is:—what exactly it is that it commands. This we shall have to try to ascertain in the sequel.

§ 6. PECULIARITY OF ETHICS. *How it differs from other Normative Sciences.*—It appears, therefore, that the science of Ethics, though belonging to the general class of normative sciences, yet differs considerably from the other members of the same class. This difference may now be more accurately defined under the two following heads:—

(1) *Ethics is not concerned with a presupposed end.*—Other normative sciences are, as we have seen, hypothetical. They presuppose an end, with a view to which they lay down laws. Now Ethics also has reference to an end. But the end to which it has reference is the supreme end of man. And this end is not presupposed. On the contrary, it is a main part of the work of the science of Ethics to discover whether there is any such end; and, if so, what is its precise nature. This is, indeed, to some extent the case with most other normative sciences as well. Thus the science of health not only teaches us the laws by which health is to be attained, but also instructs us with regard to

[1] On this subject the student should consult Kant's *Metaphysic of Morals*, section II. The opening paragraphs of Clifford's Essay "On the Scientific Basis of Morals" may also be found suggestive, though he does not entirely accept the view indicated above.

the nature of health itself. But on the whole such sciences, just because they are concerned with definite and limited objects, presuppose a fairly complete understanding of the object at which we are to aim. In Ethics, on the other hand, the object is not a definite and limited one, but is the whole content of the highest good for man. As soon as we understand precisely what this is, there is very little more for Ethics to tell us. Not only is the ethical end not definitely presupposed; but the discovery and definition of it form even the largest part of the science.

(2) *The Laws of Ethics are absolutely imposed on the Will.*—The laws with which the other normative sciences deal are simply the rules for the attainment of certain definite ends; and it is always possible that those ends may not be adopted by us. Their laws are thus only conditional commands. Thus, the laws of cookery may instruct us how to make food agreeable and palatable; but if we are ascetics we may not wish it to be made agreeable. The laws of such sciences, therefore, have no direct bearing on the will of the individual. It is the very essence of the principles of Ethics, on the other hand, that they are the laws which the individual will must accept.[1] The laws of cookery may be laid down without any consideration of the question whether any one is to adopt them; though, no doubt, no one would be likely to take the trouble of formulating them unless he intended them to be observed. But the laws of morals would be absolutely meaningless if they were not the laws by which the individual's will is to be guided.

§ 7. PECULIARITY OF CONDUCT AS AN ART. *How it differs from other arts.*—As the science of conduct is thus different from other normative sciences, so the art of conduct is different from other practical arts. Virtue may be said

[1] *I. e.* must regard as binding.

to be one of the fine arts; but it differs from all other fine arts in two important respects:—

(1) *Virtue exists only in activity.*—A good painter is one who *can* paint beautifully: a good man is not one who *can*, but one who *does*, act rightly. The good painter is good when he is asleep or on a journey.[1] The good man is not good when asleep or on a journey, unless when it is good to sleep or to go on a journey. Goodness is not a capacity or potentiality, but an activity; in Aristotelian language, it is not a δύναμις, but an ἐνέργεια.

This is a simple point, and yet it is a point that presented great difficulty to ancient philosophers. By nothing perhaps were they so much misled as by the analogy of virtue to the arts.[2] Thus in Plato's *Republic*, Socrates is represented as arguing that if justice consists in keeping property safe, the just man must be a kind of thief; for the same kind of skill which enables a man to defend property, will also enable him to steal it.[3] The answer to this is, that justice is not a kind of skill, but a kind of activity. The just man is not merely one who *can*, but one who *does*, keep property safe. Now though the *capacity* of preserving property may be identical with the *capacity* of appropriating it, the *act* of preserving is certainly very different from the act of appropriating. The man who knows precisely what the truth about any matter is, would undoubtedly, as a general rule, be the most competent person to invent lies with respect to the same matter. Yet the truth-speaker and the liar are very different persons; because they are not merely men

[1] *Cf.* Aristotle's *Ethics*, I. viii. 9.

[2] This does not apply to Aristotle. See the passage referred to in the preceding note.

[3] Of course, Plato intended this for a joke; but it is doubtful whether he knew exactly where the fallacy comes in.

who possess particular kinds of capacity, but men who act in particular ways. Often, indeed, the most atrocious liars have no special capacity for the art. And so also it is with other vices. "The Devil," it is said, "is an Ass."

(2) *The Essence of Virtue lies in the Will.*—The man who is a bungler in any of the particular arts may be a very worthy and well-meaning person; but the best intentions in the world will not make him a good artist. In the case of virtuous action, on the other hand, as Kant says,[1] "a good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition." "Even if it should happen that, owing to a special disfavour of fortune, or the niggardly provision of a step motherly nature, this will should wholly lack power to accomplish its purpose, if with its greatest efforts it should yet achieve nothing, and there should remain only the good will (not, to be sure, a mere wish, but the summoning of all means in our power), then, like a jewel, it would still shine by its own light, as a thing which has its whole value in itself." In like manner, Aristotle says[2] of a good man living in circumstances in which he cannot find scope for his highest virtues, διαλάμπει τὸ καλόν, "his nobility shines through." It is true that even in the fine arts purpose counts for something; and a stammering utterance may be not without a grace of its own.[3] In

[1] *Metaphysic of Morals*, I. [2] *Ethics*, I. x. 12.

[3] *Cf.* Browning's *Andrea del Sarto*:—

"That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right—that, a child may understand."

But here Art is being judged almost from an ethical, rather than from a purely æsthetical point of view. "*He means* right," is not an æsthetical judgment.

conduct also, if a man blunders entirely, we generally assume that there was some flaw in his purpose—that he did not reflect sufficiently, or did not will the good with sufficient intensity. Still, the distinction remains, that in art the ultimate appeal is to the work achieved, whereas in morals the ultimate appeal is to the inner aim. Or rather, in morals the achievement cannot be distinguished from the inner activity by which it is brought about.[1]

§ 8. EXPLANATION OF THESE PECULIARITIES. *Conduct the whole of Life.*—These peculiarities of moral science and the moral art are easily accounted for. They are due to the fact that in dealing with morals we are concerned with man's whole nature as an active being—*i.e.* as a being pursuing ends. Matthew Arnold has said that "Conduct is three-fourths of life"; but of course, from the point of view of purposive activity, conduct is the *whole* of life. It is common to distinguish the pursuit of truth (science) and the pursuit of beauty (fine art) from the moral life in the narrower sense; but when truth and beauty are regarded as ends to be attained, the pursuit of them is a kind of conduct; and the consideration of these ends, as of all others, falls within the scope of the science of morals. In a sense, therefore, Ethics is not a science at all, if by a science we understand the study of some limited department of human interest. It is rather a part of philosophy, *i.e.* a part of the study of human interests as a whole. It is, indeed, only a *part* of philosophy; because it considers human interests only from the point of view of will or activity. It does not, except indirectly, consider man as *knowing* or *enjoying*, but as *doing*, *i.e.* pursuing an end. But it considers man's *whole* activity, the entire nature of the good which he seeks, and the whole significance of his

[1] This point is more fully brought out in chapter iii.

activity in seeking it. It is for this reason that Ethics differs so markedly from other normative sciences, which merely deal with particular ends. It might be better, therefore, not to describe Ethics as a science at all. In some respects the term Moral Philosophy is preferable.[1]

These remarks must now suffice with regard to the general nature and scope of Ethics.[2]

[1] The term Ethics is retained in this Manual partly for the sake of brevity, and partly because the necessary limitations of the volume prevent a thoroughly philosophical treatment.

[2] It may be well to insert a caution at this point. Ethics has been defined as the science of the ultimate end; and it has been implied that the study of this end will lead to the consideration of the laws or rules for its attainment. It is well to remark, however, that the extent to which any such laws or rules can be formulated, is a question for further consideration. See below, chapter xi. and Appendix B, Note I. A study of the end will necessarily lead to a better understanding of the general principles by which conduct is to be guided. But it may not lead to the formulation of any particular rules.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELATION OF ETHICS TO OTHER SCIENCES.

"Τίνας γὰρ εἶναι χρεὼν τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι, καὶ ποίας ἑκάστους μανθάνειν καὶ μέχρι τίνος, αὕτη διατάσσει."[1]—ARISTOTLE.

§ 1. PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS.—The place of Ethics among other sciences has been already in some degree indicated; but some further remarks on its precise position may help to prevent misunderstanding in the following chapters.

We may note first, as already indicated, that Ethics must rather be classed with Philosophy than with Science in the narrower sense. It is not concerned, like the particular sciences, with some special piece of knowledge, but with man's whole practical relation towards the world. From this point of view, it is rather akin to poetry and religion than to the classification and explanation of particular facts. The broad consideration of the question what we ought to be and do is not much affected by any discoveries with regard to the facts of nature; but it is profoundly affected by the general philosophical point of view which we adopt. That view which is known as Idealism—the view that the world is a rational system, finding its ultimate explanation in mind—seems to be the only view that affords a quite satisfactory basis for an ethical theory; and as it is impossible in such a book as this to enter into metaphysical

[1] ("It lets us know which of the sciences a state needs, and which each man should study, and up to what point.")

discussions, the truth of this point of view will require to be to a large extent presupposed in the sequel. At the same time, an attempt will be made to indicate exactly the points at which the discussion is affected by the presupposition, and the exact way in which it is so affected.

§ 2. PHYSICAL SCIENCE AND ETHICS.—The relation of Physical Science to Ethics is but slight. It has sometimes been supposed that the question of physical causation has an important bearing on Ethics. It has been thought that morality postulates the freedom of the will, and that there is a certain conflict between this postulate and the theory of the universal applicability of the law of cause and effect. This point will be referred to in a subsequent chapter. In the meantime it must suffice to say that the supposition of such a conflict appears to rest upon a misconception.

Of course, Ethics is indirectly related to Physical Science, inasmuch as a knowledge of physical laws enables us to predict, more accurately and certainly than we should otherwise be able to do, what the effect of various kinds of conduct will be. But this knowledge affects only the details of conduct, not the general principles on which our conduct ought to proceed. A wise man in modern times will be less afraid of the sea and of the stars, and more afraid of foul air and impure water, than a man of similar wisdom in ancient times; but the general consideration of the question, what kinds of things we ought to fear, and what kinds we ought not to fear, need not be affected by this difference in detail, which is due to the advance of knowledge.

§ 3. BIOLOGY AND ETHICS.—The relation of Biology to Ethics is much closer than that of Physics or Chemistry, but is essentially of the same indirect character. Many of the most sacred of human obligations rest on physiological considerations; but the general principles on which these

obligations rest can be discussed without any direct reference to physiological details, and would not be affected by any new physiological discoveries.

Some recent writers, under the influence of the theory of evolution,[1] have represented the connection of Biology with Ethics as being of a much more fundamental character than that which has now been indicated. It has been thought that the criterion of good or bad conduct is to be found in the tendency to promote the development of life or the reverse; and that, consequently, we may speak of good or bad conduct in the lowest forms of life in quite the same sense as in man. This is a view to which some reference will have to be made at a later stage. In the meantime it seems sufficient to say that conduct, in the sense in which the term is used in Ethics, has no meaning except with reference to a being who has a rational will; and that, in the case of such a being, the development of life is but a subordinate part of the end. Consequently, Biology does not appear to have any direct bearing upon Ethics.[2]

§ 4. PSYCHOLOGY AND ETHICS.—The relation of Psychology to Ethics is much closer and more important. At the same time, the dependence of the one upon the other ought not to be exaggerated. As Logic deals with the correctness of thought, so Ethics deals with the correctness of conduct. Neither of them is directly concerned with the process by which we come to think or to act correctly. Still, the processes of feeling, desiring, and willing cannot be

[1] See especially Spencer's *Principles of Ethics*.

[2] It is only in so far as we attribute some form of self-consciousness to the lower animals that we are entitled to speak of "sub-human" Ethics. *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 196, *note*, and see below, chap. iii., § 2, and pp. 122-3.

ignored by the student of Ethics; any more than the processes of generalizing, judging, and reasoning can be ignored by the student of Logic; and the consideration of all these falls within the province of the psychologist. It is true that these subjects, so far as the logician and the moralist are concerned with them, belong rather to the metaphysics of Psychology than to its purely natural history side; but it is difficult to separate entirely these two sides of the science. Strictly speaking, it may be true that Ethics is entirely dependent on Metaphysics, and not at all on Psychology; but practically a writer on Ethics cannot afford entirely to ignore psychological questions.

§ 5. LOGIC AND ETHICS.—To Logic Ethics is much more nearly akin than to either physical or mental science; and the relation between the two former sciences must, consequently, be somewhat more minutely considered. Both are concerned with ideals; and indeed the ideals with which they are concerned are more closely connected than one might at first suppose. There are, broadly speaking, three distinct kinds of Logic—(1) Formal or Analytic Logic,[1] of which the ideal is self-consistency; (2) Material or Synthetic Logic,[2] of which the ideal is consistency with the outer world; (3) Transcendental Logic,[3] which is analytically synthetic, or synthetic *à priori*, and of which the ideal is consistency with *the self*, *i. e.* with the unity of our self-conscious experience. Now, Ethics is very closely related to the third of these Logics; for the ideal of Ethics also is a certain kind of consistency with the self—*viz.* the consistency of the individual will with the idea of self-consciousness as a rational principle. The precise nature of this ideal,

[1] Also called Deductive Logic. [2] Also called Inductive Logic.

[3] This kind of Logic was first discussed by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*; afterwards developed in Hegel's *Logic*.

however, and its relation to the ideal of Transcendental Logic, will have to be more fully explained in the sequel. In the meantime it is sufficient to indicate its place as a kind of fourth Logic, but a Logic which has reference to the consistency of conduct, not to the consistency of thought. It is the aim of the first Logic to keep our thought consistent with the presuppositions from which it starts; of the second Logic, to keep our thought consistent with our observation of nature, and with those general presuppositions which are involved in the knowledge of nature; of the third Logic, to keep our thought consistent with the presuppositions of all possible experience; of the fourth Logic (*i. e.* of Ethics), to bring our wills into consistency with the idea of a rational self. The meaning of this will become more apparent to the student after he has read some of the subsequent chapters.

§ 6. ETHICS AND POLITICS.—So far we have spoken of Ethics as being concerned with the will of the individual. The individual, however, does not live alone. An entirely solitary human being is inconceivable. A man is always a member of some kind of community. As Aristotle said, he is a political animal (πολιτικὸν ζῷον). Hence the science of Ethics is very closely related to that of Politics. We cannot well consider the virtues of the individual without considering also the society to which he is related, and the ways in which it may help or hinder the development of his life. The ideal also which we lay down for the individual will necessarily suggest an ideal arrangement of society, which will be best fitted to enable the individual to realize his highest aims. For this reason, Aristotle even went so far as to say that Ethics is essentially a part of Politics. If we accept this statement, however, we must employ the term Politics in a very wide sense. In this wide sense it is

perhaps better to use the term Social Philosophy. But even in the narrower sense of the term, it is evident that the relation of Ethics to Politics must be a very intimate one.[1]

§ 7. ETHICS AND ECONOMICS.—Another science to which Ethics is closely related is one to which great importance has been attached in recent times—the science of Economics. Economics, like Ethics, is concerned with *goods*, i. e. with things having value with reference to certain human ends. But while the goods with which Ethics deals are those acts which are the conditions of the attainment of the highest end of life, economic goods are merely those objects which are the means of satisfying any human want. It follows that if we are really to understand the worth of economic goods, we must consider them in close relation to the ethical good. Food, for instance, clothing, house room, and the like, are economic goods; and they serve a variety of purposes—the support of life, the development of life, the prolongation of life, the promotion of enjoyment, the attainment of independence, the furtherance of peace, decency, and security, and so on. And the worth of the goods will depend on the importance of these ends. Now the importance of these ends can be ascertained only by observing their relation to the supreme end of our lives. Hence a certain knowledge of Ethics is presupposed in the intelligent study of Economics. This truth has frequently been overlooked. The study of Economics has too often been conducted in such a way as to suggest that Wealth is an end in itself; and this has had the practical result of retarding social reforms, and encouraging those who are already too much prepared to pursue riches at any price. For this reason some of the leading writers on Political Economy

[1] *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 36 *sqq.*, and see below, chaps. ix. and x.

have been severely criticized by Carlyle and Ruskin and other moralists; and it is now generally recognized that the two sciences of Ethics and Economics must be brought into closer relationship to one another.[1]

§ 8. ETHICS AND PÆDAGOGICS.—Ethics ought also to throw an important light on the science of Education. The reader has probably already discovered, from his previous course of philosophic study, that the science of psychology has a good deal to say that bears on Education.[2] Psychology, however, is chiefly concerned with the various capacities of the human mind and the method of their development. The light which it throws on mental Education is similar to that which is thrown by physiology on physical Education. The question as to what qualities it is most desirable to evoke and strengthen must obviously depend on our view of the qualities which the good citizen ought to possess, and generally on our view of the nature of the ethical end.[3]

§ 9. ETHICS AND ÆSTHETICS.—The study of the Good is also closely related to the study of the Beautiful. Indeed, so close is the connection between the two conceptions that the Greeks used the same word, τὸ καλόν, indifferently to express beauty and moral nobility. The phrase "beauty of holiness" also occurs in Hebrew literature; and in modern times we sometimes meet with such expressions as "beauti-

[1] On this subject, *cf.* Keynes's *Scope and Method of Political Economy*, chap. ii. For a more extreme view, see Devas's *Political Economy*, Book IV., chap. v. Cf. *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. III., no. 3.

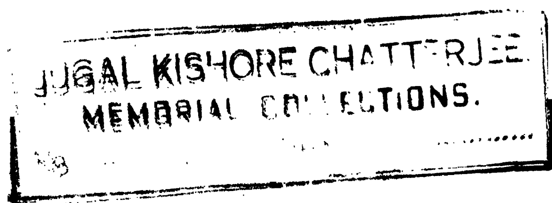
[2] This is brought out, for instance, in Sully's *Outlines of Psychology*.

[3] Mrs. Bryant has written a valuable book on *Educational Ends*, which brings out with considerable fulness the bearing of ethical considerations on the subject of Education. Similarly, Milton's *Tractate on Education* is written throughout with reference to an ethical ideal. *Cf.* also Bacon's *De Augmentis*, Book VII. and works cited below, p. 224, *note*.

ful soul," "a beautiful life," and the like—though these expressions generally refer rather to religious piety than to purely moral excellence, and even in that reference strike us perhaps as savouring a little of cant. I have already indicated that the Greek philosophers got into some trouble through their failure to distinguish clearly between moral conduct and art; and the sharper separation in modern times between the two conceptions marks an advance in scientific clearness. When the moral life is regarded as beautiful, it is looked at from a somewhat external point of view, as if it were a result rather than an act of will; and it was no doubt partly because the Greeks had not fully reached the inner point of view (for which we are largely indebted to Christianity) that they were tempted to regard the moral life as if it were simply an artistic product. When we regard morality as involving a struggle of the will, it can scarcely impress us as beautiful. In the religious sense also, when we speak of the beauty of holiness, beautiful souls, and beautiful lives, we are generally thinking of the persons referred to as if they "flourished" rather than lived, as if they were passive products rather than active producers. Still, it cannot be denied that the contemplation of a life of eminent virtue yields us a certain æsthetic satisfaction; and from certain points of view it is tempting, even for a modern writer, to regard virtue as a kind of beauty. The consideration of the relation between the Good and the Beautiful is, however, too difficult a subject to be taken up at this point; and we must reserve a brief discussion of it for a separate chapter.

§ **10.** Ethics and Religion.—The relation of Ethics to Religion is also very close. This point, like some of those that have gone before, will become more apparent in the sequel. Here it is enough to say that the ideal of Ethics,

being only imperfectly realized, requires a certain faith in the possibility of its attainment. The ideal of formal Logic requires no such faith. It is easy to remain consistent in our thought with the presuppositions from which we have set out. In the case of material or inductive Logic, the ideal is not quite so easily attained. It is difficult to conform our thoughts completely to the facts of nature; and hence in this case a certain kind of faith is required. The faith that such knowledge as this is possible is the faith on which all science rests. Similarly in the case of transcendental Logic, the ideal is not one that can be readily attained. It is difficult to give a complete account of the categories or general principles that are involved in a systematic experience; and it is still more difficult to view all the facts of our knowledge as forming part of such a system. That this knowledge is possible, however, is the faith on which all metaphysical science rests. But in the case of Ethics the difficulty is still greater. The individual will is found to act continually in contradiction with its ideal. Social arrangements also, and even the dead forces of nature, seem to conflict with the possibility of its attainment. Yet the demands of that ideal are of such a character that if they cannot be fulfilled our whole life seems to be emptied of its meaning and value. The faith that it can be fulfilled is the ethical faith, just as the two former are the scientific and the metaphysical faiths. It is this ethical faith that is usually understood by Religion; but it is so closely connected with the metaphysical faith that the two are almost inseparable. This point will be more fully brought out in a future chapter. In the meantime, the general relations of Ethics to other sciences have perhaps been sufficiently indicated.



CHAPTER III.

THE MORAL JUDGMENT.

"What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted."—BURNS.

§ 1. NATURE OF THE MORAL JUDGMENT.—Ethics, we have said, is concerned with the right direction of the will. The moral judgments which we pass are, in like manner, concerned with the will. Whatever is not willed, has no moral quality. An avalanche rolling down a mountain may devastate a village; a shower may save a nation from famine: but we do not judge either the one or the other to be morally bad or good. In like manner, we do not pass moral judgments on tigers or horses for their ravages or for their services, so long as we regard these as dictated by mere instinct, without volition. When we praise or blame them, we do it under the tacit assumption that their acts were voluntary. Moral judgments, then, are not passed upon all sorts of things, nor even upon all sorts of activities, but only upon *conduct.*

§ 2. DEFINITION OF CONDUCT.—The term "Conduct" is, indeed, sometimes used in a loose sense to include all sorts of vital activities, or at any rate all vital activities which are directed to an end. It is in this sense, for instance, that the term is employed by Mr. Herbert Spencer.[1] Consequently he speaks of the conduct of molluscs, etc.[2] But

[1] *Data of Ethics*, chap. i. [2] *Ibid.*, chap. ii.

this seems to be an inconvenient extension of the meaning of the term. Although the activities of molluscs are no doubt adjusted to an end, yet we cannot regard them as purposeful activities. A purposeful activity is not merely directed to an end, but, as Kant put it, directed by the *idea* of an end. Now even the higher animals, in so far as they are guided by mere instinct, cannot be supposed to have any such idea. They move towards certain ends, but they do not *will* these ends. They have an *end*, but they have no *purpose*. Now Mr. Spencer admits that purposeless acts are not to be included in conduct. Hence it seems best to confine the term conduct to those acts that are not merely adjusted to ends, but also definitely willed.

§ 3. THE GOOD WILL.—We are now in a position to understand the famous declaration with which Kant opened his great treatise on Ethics.[1] He begins it by saying that "there is nothing in the world, or even out of it, that can be called good without qualification, except a good will." The gifts of fortune, he said, and the happiness which they bring with them, are to be regarded as good only on condition that they are rightly used. Talents and worldly wisdom are, in like manner, good only when they are subordinated to the attainment of high aims. These things are only conditionally good. But a good will is good without condition. It is, as Kant said, the only jewel that shines by its own light.

§ 4. WILL AND WISH.—In thus commending the good will as supremely good, we must be careful to distinguish will from mere wish. "Hell," it is said, "is paved with good intentions." A good will is not merely a *good intention*,[2] but *a determined effort to produce a good result*. Such an effort is, from a moral point of view, supremely

[1] *Metaphysic of Morals*, section I.

[2] See note, p. 81.

good, even if, from some unforeseen contingencies, the good result is not itself achieved. A good wish is merely the consciousness that the attainment of a certain end would give satisfaction: a good will is the identification of oneself with that end. This distinction will become clearer in a future chapter, when we are considering the relation between desire and will (see chap. v., §§ 6 and 7).

§ **5.** WILL AND ACT.—We have said that a good will is supremely good, even if it fails to achieve a good result. It ought not to be supposed, however, that a good will can fail to issue in a good action. Will and act are but the inner and outer side of the same phenomenon. A good will issues in a good action; and, conversely, there can be no good action without a good will. But an action which in itself is good may lead, through the interference of other circumstances, to a bad result; and a bad action may lead to a good result. "If I throw half-a-crown at a beggar," said Dr. Johnson, "with intent to break his head, and he picks it up and buys victuals with it, the result is good, but the action in me is very wrong." On the other hand, an act in itself good may be perverted to evil ends. "You taught me language," says Caliban to Prospero, "and my profit on't Is, I know how to curse." He who benefits another may be only nourishing a snake. What constitutes the goodness of an action is the goodness of the intention;[1] but a good intention, though it produces a good action, need not produce a good result. A result is generally a resultant of several causes, of which the will of any particular agent is only one.

§ **6.** MEANING OF INTENTION.—In the last paragraph I

[1] We shall see shortly that it is only *part* of the intention—*viz.* that part which constitutes the *motive*—that determines the goodness of an action.

have stated that the goodness of an action depends on the goodness of the intention. This is true, however, only when the word "intention" is understood in a particular sense. It is necessary, therefore, to give a precise interpretation of this term, and especially to draw a clear distinction between an intention and a motive. Of course, the only intentions with which we are here concerned, are intentions that issue in acts. Mere intentions—intentions which remain only at the stage of good wishes—are, as we have already indicated, of no moral value, except in so far as they may be indications of a good character. Now in the case of intentions that issue in acts, there are several elements that may be distinguished from one another. These elements may now be briefly indicated.

In the first place, we may distinguish between the *immediate* and the *remote* intentions of an act. Thus, two men may both have the immediate intention of saving a third from drowning; but the one may wish to save him from drowning simply in order that his life may be preserved, whereas the other may wish to save him from drowning in order that he may be reserved for hanging.[1] In this case, while the immediate intentions are the same, the remote intentions are very different. The remote intention of an act is sometimes called the motive; but this use of the term seems to be incorrect.

In the second place, we may distinguish between the *outer* and the *inner* intention of an act. This may be illustrated by the familiar story of Abraham Lincoln and the pig that he helped out of a ditch. On being praised for this action, Lincoln is said to have replied that he did it, not for the sake of the pig, but rather on his own account, in order to rid his mind of the uncomfortable thought of the animal's

[1] *Cf.* Mill's *Utilitarianism*, chap. ii. p. 27, *note*.

distress. Here the outer intention was to rescue the animal, while the inner intention was to remove an uncomfortable feeling from the mind. The inner intention, in this instance, is evidently only a particu'ar case of the remote intention; but it is not so in every instance. Thus if a man were to endeavour to produce a certain feeling in his mind—say, of penitence or of faith—with the view of securing the favour of Heaven, the immediate intention would be an inner one, while the remote intention would be outer. The inner intention of an act, like the remote intention, is sometimes apt to be confounded with the motive.

In the third place, we may distinguish between the *direct* and the *indirect* intention of an act. If a Nihilist seeks to blow up a train containing an Emperor and others,[1] his direct intention may be simply the destruction of the Emperor, but indirectly also he intends the destruction of the others who are in the train, since he is aware that their destruction will be necessarily included along with that of the Emperor.

In the fourth place, we may distinguish between the *conscious* and the *unconscious* intention of an act. To what extent any intention can be unconscious, is a question for psychology. By an unconscious intention is here understood simply an intention which the agent does not definitely avow to himself. A man's conduct is often in reality profoundly influenced by such intentions. Thus the intention which he avows to himself may be that of promoting the well-being of mankind, while in reality he may be much more strongly influenced by that of advancing his own reputation. Here, again, the unconscious intention is often referred to as the motive, and not included as part of the intention at all. But this seems to be due to an error.

[1] *Cf.* Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., chap. i., § 2, footnote.

We may say, then, that an intention, in the broadest sense of the term, means any aim that is definitely adopted as an object of will; and that such intentions may be of various distinct kinds.

§ 7. MEANING OF MOTIVE.—The term "motive" is not less ambiguous than "intention." The motive means, of course, what *moves* us or *causes* us to act in a particular way. Now there is an ambiguity in the term "cause." A cause may be either efficient or final. The efficient cause of a man's movements, for instance, is the action of certain nerves, muscles, &c.; the final cause is the desired end, the reaching of a destination or the production of a result. There is a similar ambiguity in the use of the term "motive."[1] A motive may be understood to mean either that which *impels* or that which *induces* us to act in a particular way.

In the former sense, we say that we are moved by feeling or emotion. Thus we say that a man's motive was anger, or jealousy, or fear, or pity, or pleasure, or pain. Some writers[2] have even maintained that pleasure and pain are the only ultimate motives. Now it is no doubt true that men are sometimes moved to action by feeling. In conduct on which a moral judgment can be passed, however, a man is never solely moved by feeling. If a man is entirely "carried away" by feeling—by anger or fear, for instance——he cannot properly be said to *act* at all, any more than a stone acts when a man throws it at an object. We may judge the *character* of a man who is carried away by feeling or passion: we may say that he ought not to have allowed himself to be so carried away; but if he is entirely mastered by his passion, we cannot pass a moral judgment on his act, any more than on the act of a madman, or one who is

[1] *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 56. [2] *E.g.* Bentham.

drunk. Moral activity or conduct is purposeful action; and action with a purpose is not simply moved by feeling: it is moved rather by the thought of some end to be attained. This leads us to the second, and more correct, sense in which the term "motive" may be used.

The distinction may be made clear by considering the case of a man who is "moved by pity" to give assistance to a fellow-creature in distress. The mere feeling of pity is evidently not sufficient to move us to action. It may serve as an element in the efficient cause of action—*i. e.* the man who has a keen sense of pity may be more readily impelled to action than the one whose feeling is comparatively blunt. But the feeling itself is not a sufficient *inducement* to action. By itself, it moves at the utmost to tears—as, for instance, in the theatre, when we witness imaginary distresses. When a man is moved to action, he must have, besides the mere feeling, the conception of an end to be attained. He perceives a fellow-creature, for instance, in a wretched plight, and sees that, by a certain effort, the man might be put in a more favourable position. The putting of the man in this more favourable position presents itself to his mind as a desirable end; and the thought of this desirable end induces him to act in a particular way. If he feels pity, in addition, this may impel him the more readily to such an action; but the feeling of pity is not, by itself, the inducement to the action, *i. e.* the motive in the more correct sense. The motive, that which induces us to act, is the thought of a desirable end.[1]

[1] So also when, in Goldsmith's ballad,

"The dog, to gain some private ends,
Went mad, and bit the man,"

the motive was constituted by the gaining of some private ends, not by the mere madness. *Cf.* Tucker's *Light of Nature*, chap. v.

§ 8. Relation between Motives and Intentions.—From what has now been said, it is evident that the relation between motives and intentions is a very close one. The motive of our act is that which induces us to perform it. Now it is evident that this must be included in the intention, in the broadest sense of that term, but need not be, and generally will not be, identical with the whole of it.[1] What induces us to perform an act is always something that we hope to achieve by it;[2] but there may be much that we expect to achieve by it (and even that we consciously *intend* to achieve by it) which would not serve as an inducement to its performance, and which might even serve as an inducement not to perform it. The motive of a reformer may be partly that of improving the state of mankind and partly that of acquiring fame for himself. Both of these ends form part of his intention, in the widest sense of the term. But he may also be well aware that the result of his action will be, for a time, "not to send peace on the earth, but a sword." He may anticipate a certain amount of confusion and misery as the immediate result of his action, and perhaps also of persecution for himself. If he clearly foresees that these results will ensue on his action, it can scarcely be said that he does not intend them. He deliberately accepts them as being inevitably involved in the good result which he hopes to achieve. But assuredly we may say that these evil consequences form no part of his motive in endeavouring to achieve the good result. Or, to take a still simpler case, when Brutus helped to kill

[1] *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 58. When Prof. Dewey (*Outlines of Ethics*, p. 9) says that "the foreseen, the *ideal* consequences are the end of the act, and as such form the motive," he appears to identify the motive with the whole intention. This seems to me to be erroneous, or at least to be an inconvenient use of the term.

[2] Except of course when we are impelled by mere feeling or passion,

Cæsar, in order to save his country,[1] he certainly intended to kill Cæsar, but the killing of Cæsar was no part of his motive.

The motive of an act, then, is a part of the intention, in the broadest sense of that term, but does not necessarily include the whole of the intention. Adopting the distinctions that have been drawn in section 6, we may say that the motive generally includes the greater part of the remote intention, but frequently does not include much of the immediate intention; that it generally includes the direct intention, but not the indirect; and that it may be either outer or inner, conscious or unconscious.

§ 9. IS THE MORAL JUDGMENT CONCERNED WITH MOTIVES OR WITH INTENTIONS?—There has been a good deal of discussion on the question whether, in judging of the morality of an action, we ought to take account of the motive or of the intention.[2] We are now in a position to give an answer to this question. But we must first observe what is the precise nature of the controversy.

The controversy has been carried on chiefly between writers of the intuitional and the utilitarian school.[3] The former have generally maintained that the moral judgment is concerned entirely with the motives of our actions, that our actions are to be pronounced good or bad in proportion to the goodness or badness of the motives by which we are actuated in doing them. Thus Dr. Martineau, the most eminent of recent intuitionist writers, has drawn out an

[1] Assuming the view taken by Plutarch and Shakspere to be correct. For a different view of Brutus, see Froude's *Cæsar*.

[2] This subject is well treated by Prof. Dewey in his *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 4—6, and more fully in Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 55–62.

[3] The nature of these two schools will become apparent in the sequel.

elaborate table of the motives of our conduct, and arranged them in order of merit.[1] He places reverence at the top, and censoriousness, vindictiveness, and suspiciousness at the bottom, while between these lie a great variety of passions, appetites, affections, sentiments, etc.; such as love of ease, fear, ambition, generosity, and compassion. Now to discuss the merits of such a scheme as this would evidently carry us beyond the limits of such a handbook as the present. Two criticisms, however, may be passed upon it. In the first place, the list of motives, or "springs of action" (as they are also called), seems to rest on a false conception of psychological divisions. The student of psychology will probably have become familiar with this objection. Modern Psychology treats the human mind as an organic unity, and repudiates any hard and fast distinctions of faculties, such as seem to be implied in Dr. Martineau's list. The motives which he enumerates are not simple, but highly complex, phenomena; and their merits in any particular case would depend on the way in which they are composed. Fear, for instance, is not a simple element in consciousness, but a complex state; and its merit or demerit depends on the way in which we fear and the thing of which we are afraid. The same applies to ambition, and to most of the other motives enumerated by Dr. Martineau. But, apart from this, the list seems to involve that confusion between the different senses of the term "motive" to which reference has already been made. Thus fear and compassion, though referring to objects, may be treated as emotional states; whereas ambition does not denote a state of feeling, but rather an object aimed

[1] *Types of Ethical Theory*, Part II., Book I., chap. vi. A criticism of Martineau's doctrine will be found in Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., chap. xii.

at—not indeed a definite object, but a range of objects almost infinite in variety (from the desire to be Mayor of a town to the desire to be the saviour of one's country), having only in common the desire of some form of personal eminence. Now mere feelings in the mind, such as fear and compassion, do not seem, as I have already indicated, to constitute motives at all, in the proper sense of the term: they are not inducements to action. What induces us to act is the presentation of some end to be attained. Consequently, if we are to have a list of motives, this list should take the form rather of a classification of ends to be attained, than of feelings that exist in our minds. Further, these ends would have to be arranged, not under any such abstract headings as "ambition" and the like, but in accordance with their actual, concrete nature.

The antagonism of the utilitarians seems to be partly due to the inadequacy of the intuitionist theory. Thus Mill urges[1] that "the morality of an action depends entirely upon the intention—that is, upon what the agent *wills to do*. But the motive, that is, the feeling which makes him will so to do, when it makes no difference in the act, makes none in the morality: though it makes a great difference in our moral estimation of the agent, especially if it indicates a good or a bad habitual *disposition*." "The motive of an action," he says again,[2] "has nothing to do with the morality of the action, though much with the worth of the agent." The reasonableness of this view is apparent. If one man is animated by compassion and another by fear, we may think the former a more amiable man and the latter a more cowardly man: but if they are led to act in precisely the same way, must not their actions be regarded as equally good or bad? They are not perhaps equally good *men*;

[1] *Utilitarianism*, chap. ii., p. 27, *note*. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

but that is not the question. A good man may do a bad action, and a bad man may do a good action. The question is simply—Are their actions good or bad? How they feel in doing the actions may affect our judgment of their characters, of their lives as a whole, but not of their particular actions. Of course if their actions are *different* in consequence of their feelings—if, for instance, the man who feels compassion does the act in a more gracious way, and the man who feels fear does it in a hurried and awkward way—our moral judgment upon the actions will be different. But the reason is that in this case the feeling has to some extent affected the nature of the act that is willed. This is Mill's view; and it is evidently a reasonable view, so far as it goes. Nevertheless, it appears to me to be erroneous.

§ **10.** THE MORAL JUDGMENT IS CONCERNED WITH MOTIVES.—So long indeed as the reference is merely to the feelings by which our actions are accompanied, there is no need to dispute Mill's position.[1] But if we understand the motive to mean that which induces us to act in a particular way, then I think we must maintain that it is on the motive that the moral judgment is passed. Mill's error seems to arise from this, that he supposes the moral judgment to be passed on things done, whereas the moral judgment is not properly passed upon a *thing done*, but upon a *person doing*. If it were not so, we should pass moral judgment on the instinctive acts of animals, and even on the movements of rocks, clouds, and avalanches. What we judge is *conduct*; and this means not merely an overt act, but the attitude of a person in acting; and his

[1] Of course the nature of our feelings is ultimately determined by the nature of the ends that we have in view, and consequently in disputing the one position we are in reality disputing the other as well.

attitude must include his motive. Now Mill himself admits that the motive (even in the sense of the mere feeling, and surely much more in the sense of the end with reference to which we are induced to act) makes a difference in our estimation of the agent. It is true, indeed, that in passing a moral judgment upon a particular act we need not take account of the whole character of the man who does it. If a man gets drunk, or tells a lie, or defrauds his neighbour, we can say that he has done wrong, without needing to inquire whether he is in other respects a good man or a bad. But this does not imply that we judge his action simply from the outside, as a thing done. It is the man doing it that we judge; and the question, what induced him to do it, is not irrelevant to this judgment. It may be admitted that we frequently omit this inner side of a man's conduct in forming our judgments. But the reason is, that it is so difficult to ascertain what the inner side is. With regard to all men's actions (except our own),

> "One point must still be greatly dark,
> The moving *why* they do it."

Hence the force of the precept "judge not!" But in so far as we do judge, when we try to be thoroughly just in our moral appreciations, it seems unquestionable that we take account of the motive, and that this is what we are bound to take account of.[1]

[1] An example may help to make this clear. It has been urged that if it is just to put a man to death, this act will not be rendered vicious by the mere fact that the execution of it is accompanied by a feeling of resentment or malevolence. Certainly, I should answer, the mere feeling of resentment will make no difference in the morality of the action, any more than a feeling of reluctance or a feeling of weariness. But it is otherwise if the gratification of the feeling was the *motive* of the act. If a judge were to condemn a criminal to death, not because it is just, but because he feels resentment, and *aims at the gratification of*

It may be objected, of course, that a man's motives are sometimes excellent, while yet we feel bound to condemn his actions. Some fanatics, for instance, have performed acts of the utmost atrocity, "thinking that they did God service." Are we to approve these actions, it may be asked, because the end aimed at was good? In answering this question, we must be sure that we understand exactly what the question is. Are we to understand that we are asked, whether, in the case of such actions, we regard the thing done as a desirable result? If so, our answer would no doubt be decidedly, No. In the same way we should say that the fall of an avalanche is not a desirable result. But in neither case is our judgment a *moral* judgment. On the other hand, if we are asked whether we consider that the fanatics in question acted rightly, then we must answer that, in so far as they were aiming steadfastly at a definite end, and in so far as that end was a good one, we must approve of their actions. As a rule, indeed, we shall not entirely approve of them; but the reason is that we do not regard their aims as perfectly good. This is implied in calling them fanatics. A fanatic is one who pursues some narrow end as if it were the supreme good. The motive of such a man is not the best possible, and the more conscientiously he is guided by that motive the more certainly will his actions not be the best possible.

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this feeling, then undoubtedly his action would be wrong, though the result of it might accidentally be right—*i. e.* it might be the case that the criminal ought to have been put to death. Of course in such a case the intention is wrong as well as the motive. This is necessarily so; for the motive is part of the intention. In the case supposed, it is part of the judge's intention (his *inner* intention, as I have called it) to gratify his feeling of resentment. But if this had not been part of his *motive*, it would not have vitiated his action—*i. e.* if it had not been part of his *inducement*.

We cannot now spend more time over this controversy.[1] Indeed a quite satisfactory solution of the problem involved cannot be given until we have discussed the nature of the moral end. Consequently, if the student should find—as the beginner probably will—that the question is a perplexing one, he may pass it over until he has read some of the following chapters.[2]

§ **11.** THE HIGHEST MOTIVE.—If it be true that we judge actions by their motives, it is evident that an act cannot be judged to be perfectly right unless it be done from the highest motive. And as the motive is the end with a view to which the action is performed, the highest motive is the same as the highest end. Hence, an action is not perfectly right unless it is done with a view to the highest end. This was what Kant meant when he said[3] that a good action must be done "from respect for the law." The same truth is involved in the Christian doctrine that "whatever is not of faith is sin"; and it was this also that the Greek moralists had in their minds when they spoke of a good action as being done τοῦ καλοῦ ἕνεκα—for the sake of the beautiful or the noble.[4] It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that this end must be always consciously present in a good

[1] The consideration of this whole subject is a good deal complicated by the fact that the distinction which has been drawn between motives and intentions is not uniformly observed in the ordinary usage of these terms. Thus, the word intention is sometimes used in the sense of motive. This seems to be the case, for instance, in the phrase "though endeavoured with best intentions," as used by Milton in his *Mode of Establishing a Free Commonwealth*, § 4.

[2] The more advanced student, on the other hand, may profitably consult Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book II., chap. ii., Book III., chap. i., and Book IV., chap. i. See also Martineau's *Types of Ethical Theory*, Part II., Book I., chap. vi., § 15, and *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. IV., nos. 1 and 2.

[3] *Metaphysic of Morals*, section II.

[4] *Cf.* Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book III., chap. v., § 252.

action. The motive may be part of what I have called the *unconscious* intention. The best actions are often done without any thought of their final end. We shall see in the next chapter that it was a characteristic of the extreme rigorism of Kant's system, that he did not allow such unconscious performance of duty to rank as moral at all.

§ **12.** CHARACTER.—So far, we have regarded the moral judgment as being passed upon particular actions.[1] We have seen, however, in noticing the views of Mill, that we also pass judgment upon the *disposition* or *character* of the agent. There is nothing inconsistent in this, as we shall shortly see; for particular acts of will are simply expressions of the general character; so that in judging particular acts we are implicitly judging character, and a general judgment on character is simply a summing up of these particular judgments. But a man's character is not fully expressed in any one act of will; and consequently the moral judgment which has to be passed on one of his actions may not fairly represent the judgment which ought to be passed on his general character. A man's character is constituted by the motives on which he habitually acts, *i. e.* by his predominant *interests* or inducements to action; and in judging of his character it is on these interests that we pronounce our verdict. The meaning of this, however, will become clearer after reading some of the following chapters.[2]

We must now endeavour to determine the nature of our supreme end.

[1] *I. e.*, as we have seen, upon particular cases of a person acting, not merely upon particular cases of a thing done.

[2] See especially chap. v., § 9.

CHAPTER IV.

DUTY.

> "Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
> The Godhead's most benignant grace."—WORDSWORTH.

§ 1. THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE.—It has already been stated that the imperative of duty is distinguished from other imperatives by the fact that it is *categorical*, and not simply hypothetical or assertorial. Kant was the first writer who made this truth prominent;[1] and the inferences which he drew from it are so important that they seem to demand special notice at this point.

Kant argued that, since the moral imperative is categorical, it cannot be derived from the consideration of any end outside of the will of the individual. For every external end is empirical, and could give rise only to a hypothetical imperative. We should only be entitled to say that, *if* we seek that end, we are bound to act in a particular way, with a view to its attainment. Kant held, therefore, that the absolute imperative of duty has no reference to any external ends to which the will is directed, but simply to the right direction of the will itself. This view, though most clearly worked out by Kant, has been held also by a number of other moralists, and is commonly known as the intuitional theory. Before making any further reference to the way in which this theory was developed by Kant, it may be

[1] In his *Metaphysic of Morals*, section II.

worth while to make a few remarks on the general point of view of intuitional writers.

§ **2.** INTUITIONISM. — Intuitionism[1] may be described generally as the theory that actions are right or wrong according to their own intrinsic nature, and not in virtue of any ends outside themselves which they tend to realize. Thus, truth-speaking would be regarded as a duty, not because it is essential for social well-being, but because it is right in its own nature.[2] This theory has been held in various forms, more or less philosophical in character. For a full account of these forms reference must be made to histories of Ethics and Philosophy.[3] Here it is only possible to notice a few of the leading points.

§ **3.** THE MORAL SENSE.—One very common form of

[1] From Latin, *intueri*, to look at. The intuitionists hold that we perceive the rightness or wrongness of actions by simply looking at them, without needing to consider their relations to any ends outside themselves.

[2] It should be observed that there is a certain ambiguity in the use of the term Intuitionism. It is employed in a wider and in a narrower sense. In the narrower sense, it means a doctrine which traces our moral judgments to some unanalyzable form of *perception*, some *moral sense*. In this acceptation of the term, Kant was not an intuitionist; for he rested the moral judgment on the practical *reason*, not on perception. But in the wider sense explained above, he may be characterized as an intuitionist. For historical purposes it is generally desirable to keep Kant apart from the intuitionist writers; because his theory marks a new departure in ethical thought, and in the hands of his immediate successors led to results very far removed from those of the intuitionists. But for our present purpose it seems most convenient to regard Kant as simply the most rational of the intuitionists.

[3] For the best modern statement of the intuitionist doctrine, the student should consult Martineau's *Types of Ethical Theory*, Part II. An excellent criticism of intuitionism will be found in Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book I., chaps. viii. and ix., and Book III. For the history of the subject, see Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, especially pp. 224—236. Also pp. 170—204. Calderwood's *Handbook of Moral Philosophy* may also be referred to.

intuitionism is that which postulates the existence of a *moral sense*,[1] analogous to the sense of beauty. The plausibility of this view arises from the fact that in a well-developed character the habit of obedience to the moral law becomes a second nature, so that the choice of the right and the avoidance of the wrong passes almost into a kind of instinct. The inadequacy of the moral sense as a basis of morals, however, becomes at once apparent when we endeavour to determine definitely what principles are laid down by it. The content of the moral sense is found to vary very considerably in different ages and countries; and even at the same time and place the rules that are laid down by it are of a very uncertain character.[2] Reflection shows, moreover, that these variations are not arbitrary, but have a distinct reference to the utility of actions under varying conditions for the realization of human welfare. This has been well brought out in the very thorough examination of Common Sense Morality which is given in Dr. Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*.[3] From this it appears that the moral sense must not be regarded as a blind faculty, laying down principles

[1] Shaftesbury was the founder of this school, and its subsequent development was due chiefly to Hutcheson. See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 189. It is scarcely necessary to point out that the meaning of the term "sense," as here used, is different from that in which we speak of the sense of taste, touch, sight, &c. The latter "senses" are concerned simply with the apprehension of particular qualities of objects; whereas the moral sense or the sense of beauty passes *judgment* on such qualities. The meaning of calling it a moral *sense* is merely to imply that it is an *intuitive* faculty of judgment. Similarly, we might say that the judgments of the epicure or of the tea-taster rest upon a sense; but it is not on the mere "sense of taste" that such judgments rest, since they involve a *standard* as well as an *apprehension*.

[2] See Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book I., chap. iii., and Spencer's *Principles of Ethics*, Part II.

[3] See especially Book III., chap. xi., for a summary of Dr. Sidgwick's carefully reasoned conclusions on this point.

for our guidance which are not capable of any further analysis or justification. On the contrary, the principles which it lays down can be rationally justified and explained.

Of course, it does not follow from this that the moral sense may not, rightly enough, be regarded as a kind of taste.[1] For the sense of beauty, as well as the sense of rightness, is capable of being explained and justified. Though it is commonly said that "there is no disputing about tastes," yet we do habitually dispute about them, and pronounce them to be right or wrong. The moral taste, therefore, is so far quite analogous to the æsthetic taste, and it may be quite correct to refer to it as a sense.[2] But since it is not simply an inexplicable sense, but is capable of a rational explanation, no ethical theory can be regarded

[1] Using the term "taste," of course, in that secondary sense in which we speak of "good taste." It is not a taste like that which simply apprehends savour, but a taste like that of the tea-taster, who *judges* the qualities of teas by a kind of intuitive perception.

[2] On this point, *cf.* what is said below in Chapter xvi. Even complex intellectual processes become, after long practice, scarcely distinguishable from intuitive perceptions. A man who is highly skilled in any art seems to see at a glance what requires to be done on any given occasion. Yet we do not postulate a *sense* in such cases, because we know that the judgments of the expert rest in reality on rational grounds (though frequently he might not be able to give any clear account of the grounds of his own judgment). An illustration of a similar fact may be found in "Lord Mansfield's advice to a man of practical good sense, who, being appointed governor of a colony, had to preside in its Court of Justice, without previous judicial practice or legal education. The advice was to give his decision boldly, for it would probably be right; but never to venture on assigning reasons, for they would almost infallibly be wrong" (Mill's *Logic*, Book II., chap. iii., § 3). In such a case the reasons of the action are latent; but no one would doubt that reasons could be found. So in the moral life the good man seems to see instinctively in many cases what he ought to do, and frequently could not give any reason. It is this fact that makes it appear as if there were some special "moral sense" involved.

as thorough which simply treats it as a sense and does not endeavour to explain it. Moreover, what can be explained can usually also be criticized. When the sense of beauty, for instance, has been explained, it is possible to criticize the sense of beauty as it is found in particular individuals; and to determine that the æsthetic taste of some men is good, while that of others is defective. Similarly, when the moral sense is explained, it will naturally be possible to pass judgment on the moral tastes of different individuals and even of different ages and nations. For these reasons, then, a system of ethics which simply rests content with the idea of a moral-sense, can scarcely be regarded as satisfactory.

§ 4. Conscience.—The term "conscience" is sometimes used in such a way as to be synonymous with the "moral sense"; but in general those writers who have spoken rather of conscience[1] than of the moral sense as the foundation of morals, have meant to indicate a principle that lies somewhat deeper than any mere ethical taste. However different may be the moral sense of different times and races, it is yet often possible to bring them to a common basis of agreement; just as, indeed, such a basis of agreement is often possible in the case of the sense of beauty. A man whose sense of beauty is defective may often be made aware of the deficiency by the presentation of a higher ideal. His sense of beauty, at first latent, may thus be cultivated and developed; and the same is true with regard to the sense of moral excellence. Now this higher ideal may be partly reached by a process of reasoning —by showing, for instance, that there is some inconsistency in our ordinary standards of judgment, and by thus sug-

[1] Especially Butler. See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 195—200. *Cf.* also what is said below on the difference between Fichte and Jacobi, p. 63, *note*.

gesting the necessity for some deeper standard; but sometimes also the higher ideal may simply be reached by an appeal to those deeper feelings of humanity which lie beneath those principles on which our ordinary judgments rest. The appeal to these deeper feelings, which are often latent until they are called forth by some special stimulus, is what is generally meant by an appeal to conscience. Conscience, therefore, in this acceptation of the term, must be regarded as lying deeper than the moral sense. What exactly such an appeal to conscience means, and what is its justification, we must now further inquire.

§ **5**. THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE UNIVERSAL CONSCIENCE. When conscience is referred to as the fundamental principle of morals, we must not understand it to mean the conscience of this or that individual. The conscience of any particular individual is simply the consciousness of the harmony or disharmony of his action with his own standard of right: and if this standard is defective, the same defect will appear in the conscience. His conscience may be, in Mr. Ruskin's phrase, "the conscience of an ass." The man who does not act conscientiously certainly acts wrongly: he does not conform even to his own standard of rightness. But a man may act conscientiously and yet act wrongly, on account of some imperfection in his standard. One who acts conscientiously in accordance with some defective standard is generally known as a "fanatic."[1]

When, however, Kant says that "an erring conscience is a chimera,"[2] or when Butler says of the conscience that "if it

[1] *Cf.* above, chap. iii., § 10. It is there explained that we judge the action to be wrong because it is not done from the best motive. It may, however, appear to the agent to be the best. See also below, chap. ix., § 13.

[2] See the Preface to his *Metaphysical Elements of Ethics* (Abbott's translation), pp. 311 and 321.

had power, as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world,"[1] or when, in general, intuitional writers refer to the conscience as the supreme principle of morals, what they mean by conscience is rather what may be called the universal conscience. They mean that ultimate recognition of the rightness and wrongness of actions, which is latent in all men, but which in some men is more fully developed than in others. The principles by which this recognition is made are sometimes referred to as principles of Common Sense, because they are supposed to be common or universal throughout the whole human race. Such principles must be carefully distinguished from the principles that are found in the moral sense, which are not common to all men, but vary with different times and countries and circumstances.[2]

§ 6. PRINCIPLES OF COMMON SENSE.—The principles of common sense have been referred to by some writers[3] as if they were simply certain moral truths which are found un-

[1] *Sermon* II. *Cf.* Calderwood's *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*, pp. 271—274.

[2] It will thus be seen that there is a certain ambiguity in the use of the term "conscience." There is another ambiguity, to which we shall have occasion to refer by and by. Conscience is frequently, perhaps even generally, understood to denote, not the principles of moral judgment, but the feeling of pain which accompanies the violation of moral law. When we speak of "the voice of conscience," and of conscience as laying down laws, we are of course not speaking of it as a mere feeling of pain, but as containing principles in accordance with which we form our moral judgments. The confusion which results from this ambiguity in the use of the term is well brought out by Mr. Muirhead in his *Elements of Ethics*, p. 73. *Cf.* also Porter's *Elements of Moral Science*, p. 246. And see below, chap. ix., § 13.

[3] Especially Reid and the other members of the so-called Scotch School. See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 226—233. Dr. Martineau's theory is essentially a carrying out of this view. On the other hand, such a book as Janet's *Theory of Morals* represents a more rational interpretation of the intuitional principles.

accountably in the consciousness of mankind. Against this view there is the same objection as there is against the corresponding view with regard to intellectual truth. It conflicts with a principle which is deeper than any other principle of common sense can well be—the principle, namely, that the world must be regarded as an intelligible system of which a definite account can be given before the bar of reason. If this principle is a mistaken one, it is hard to believe that there can be any other that has a deeper claim to be regarded as of universal validity.

But the view which holds that there are certain universal principles of moral truth in the human consciousness is not necessarily pledged to regard these principles as unintelligible. Just as Kant held that there are certain principles of intellectual truth—what he called *categories*—which belong to the nature of all intelligent beings as such, so it may be held also that there are certain universal principles of moral truth. And just as the categories of our intellectual life may be deduced from the very nature of thought, so also the principles of our moral life may be capable of a rational deduction. There may be principles of our moral life which are as obvious to us, when we reflect upon them, as that $2 + 2 = 4$, or that every event must have a cause; and yet it may be possible, as in these latter cases it is, to see, on further reflection, why it is that these principles are obvious. In these cases the intuitions of the moral consciousness would in reality be due to a kind of rational insight. They would be a manifestation of what might be called moral reason. This is the view of the deeper intuitionists, of whom Clarke may be taken as a type.[1] The clearest and

[1] See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 179—184. A similar view seems to be represented by Janet in his *Theory of Morals*, Book III., chap. iv. Janet holds that, in spite of the apparent diversities of moral

most suggestive expression of this view is that which was given by Kant; and it is to his expression of it alone that it will be worth our while here to devote any attention.

§ 7. KANT'S VIEW OF THE MORAL REASON.—Kant's contention was that, since the moral imperative is an absolute command, it cannot be dependent on any empirical conditions. All particular empirical facts are contingent. It is conceivable that they may or may not exist. Consequently, if the moral imperative were dependent on any such facts, it also would be contingent, and could not be an absolute law. It follows from this that the moral law cannot have any particular content. It cannot tell us any particular things that we are to do or to abstain from doing; because all particular things have in them an empirical and contingent element, and the moral law can have no reference to any such element. Hence the moral law cannot tell us what the *matter* or content of our actions ought to be: it can only instruct us with regard to the *form*. But a pure form, without any matter, must be simply the form of law in general. That is to say, the moral law can tell us nothing more than that we are to act in a way that is conformable to law. And this means simply that our actions must have a certain self-consistency—*i. e.* that the principles on which we act must be principles that we can adopt throughout the whole of our lives, and that we can apply to the lives of others. Kant is thus led to give as the content of the categorical imperative this formula—"Act only on that

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sentiment in different peoples brought out by such writers as Locke and Spencer, there are yet certain latent principles which are the same in all men, and to which a final appeal may be made. This view seems not inconsistent with the recognition that particular individuals and races may have a very imperfect apprehension of the ultimate principles involved in their moral judgments.

maxim (or principle) which thou canst at the same time will to become a universal law."[1]

He illustrates the application of this formula by taking such a case as that of breaking promises. It is wrong to break a promise, because the breach of a promise is a kind of action which could not be universalized. If it were a universal rule that every one were to break his promise, whenever he felt inclined, no one would place any reliance on promises. Promises, in fact, would cease to be made. And of course if they were not made they could not be broken. Hence it would be impossible for every one to break his promise. And since it is impossible for every one, it must be wrong for any one. The essence of wrong-doing consists in making an exception.

Similarly, it may easily be shown that we could not, without a certain absurdity, have universal suicide,[2] or universal stealing, or even universal indifference to the misfortunes of others. Since, then, we cannot really will that such acts should be done by every one, we have no right to will that we ourselves should do them. In fact, the moral law is—Act only in such a way as you could will that every one else should act under the same general conditions.

§ 8. Criticism of Kant. (1) *Formality.*—It seems clear that the principle laid down by Kant affords in many cases a safe *negative* guide in conduct. If we cannot will that all men should, under like conditions, act as we are doing, we may generally be sure that we are acting wrongly. When, however, we endeavour to extract *positive* guidance from the formula—when we try to ascertain, by means of it, not merely what we should abstain from doing, but what we

[1] *Metaphysic of Morals*, section II.

[2] This is one of the most difficult points to prove in at all a satisfactory way. Kant's argument is ingenious, but hardly convincing.

should do—it begins to appear that it is merely a formal principle,[1] from which no definite matter can be derived; and further consideration may lead us to see that it cannot even give us quite satisfactory negative guidance.

We must first observe, however, what was the exact meaning that Kant put upon his principle. It is evident that it might be interpreted in two very different ways. It might be taken to refer to general *species* of conduct, or it might be taken to refer to *particular acts*, with all the limitations of time, place, and circumstance. It was in the former sense that the principle was understood by Kant;[2] but it is well to bear in mind that there is also a possibility of the latter interpretation. The difference between the two might be illustrated, for instance, in the case of stealing. According to the former interpretation, stealing must in all cases be condemned, because its principle cannot be universalized. According to the latter interpretation, it would be necessary, in each particular instance in which there is a temptation to steal, to consider whether it is possible to will that every human being should steal, *when placed under precisely similar conditions*. The former interpretation would evidently give us a very strict view of

[1] See the criticisms on Kant in Mill's *Utilitarianism*, chap. i., p. 5, Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, pp. 139 *sqq.*, Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 78—82, Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 120—124, Adamson's *Philosophy of Kant*, pp. 119-20, &c. For a full discussion of Kant's doctrine on this point, see Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, Book II., chap. ii. Mr. Abbott, in his translation of Kant's *Theory of Ethics*, pp. xlix—lv, partly defends Kant's point of view, but does not succeed in showing that it leads to results that are practically helpful.

[2] The reason why Kant took this view is, that he thought that a man ought not only to be able to will that the principle of his action should be universally adopted, but that it should be made into *a law of nature*. To discuss the ground on which he held this opinion, would carry us beyond the scope of this manual.

duty, while the latter might easily give us a very lax one.

Now if we accept, as Kant does, the former of these two interpretations, it seems clear that the principle is a purely formal one, from which the particular matter of conduct cannot be extracted. In order to apply it at all, we must presuppose a certain given material.[1] Thus, in order to show that stealing leads to self-contradiction, we must presuppose the existence of property. It is inconsistent to take the property of another, if we recognize the legitimacy of private property; but if any one denies this, there is no inconsistency in his acting accordingly. In order to apply Kant's principle, therefore, it is necessary first to know what presuppositions we are entitled to make. Otherwise, there is scarcely any action which might not be shown to lead to inconsistency. For instance, the relief of distress, the effort after the moral improvement of society, and the like, might be said to lead to inconsistency; for if every one were engaged in these actions, it would be unnecessary for any one to engage in them. They are necessary only because they are neglected. The only difference between these cases and that of theft or of promise-breaking, is that in the one set of cases the abolition of the activity would

[1] Kant was partly aware of this, and in his later treatment of the subject seeks to derive the positive part of moral obligation from the consideration of the twofold end—our own Perfection and the Happiness of others—and also from the general principles of Jurisprudence. See Abbott, pp. 296—302. Thus, the positive side of duty would be derived largely from utilitarian considerations, while the moral reason would simply urge us to be self-consistent. Kant's view thus approximated to that developed in recent times by Dr. Sidgwick. See below, chap. vi. But on this point, as on many others, Kant kept the different sides of his theory in separate compartments of his mind, and never really brought them together. *Cf.* Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, Book II., chaps. vi. and vii.

lead to what is regarded as a desirable result—the cessation of distress or immorality; while in the other set of cases it would lead to what is regarded as an undesirable result—the cessation of property or of promises. But when we ask why the one result is to be regarded as desirable and the other as undesirable, there is no answer from the Kantian point of view. All that the Kantian principle enables us to say is that, assuming certain kinds of conduct to be in general right, we must not make exceptions on our own behalf.

If, on the other hand, we were to adopt the second of the two possible interpretations of the principle of consistency, it would not be possible to derive from it even this very moderate amount of instruction. For to say that we are always to act in such a way that we could will that all other human beings, under exactly the same conditions, should act similarly, is merely to say that we are to act in a way that we approve. Whenever a man approves of his own course of action, he *ipso facto* wills that any one else in like conditions should do likewise. Consequently, from this principle no rule of conduct whatever can be derived. It simply throws us back upon the morality of common sense.[1]

The pure will of Kant, being thus entirely formal, and destitute of particular content, has been well described by Jacobi as a "will that wills *nothing*." [2]

§ 9. CRITICISM OF KANT (*continued*). (2) *Stringency*.—Not only is the Kantian principle open to the charge of being purely formal, it has also the defect of giving rise to a code of morals of a much stricter character than that which the

[1] Or upon utilitarian considerations. See preceding note. It may be remarked that this difficulty in Kant arises from the dualism of his philosophical point of view.

[2] See Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii., p. 216, *note*.

moral sense of the best men[1] seems to demand. Of course this cannot be regarded as a fatal criticism; for it may be that that moral sense is deficient. Still on the whole any conflict with that sense must be regarded as a *primâ facie* presumption against an ethical system in which it occurs; and along with other criticisms, may help to overthrow it. Now there are two distinct ways in which the Kantian system appears to be much too rigorous.

(*a*) In the first place, according to the Kantian view no conduct can be regarded as truly virtuous which rests on feeling. Conduct is right only in so far as it is dictated by the moral reason; and the moral reason is a purely formal principle, which has no connection with any of the feelings or passions of human nature. But much of the conduct that men commonly praise, springs rather from feeling than from any direct application of reason.[2] This has been beautifully expressed by Wordsworth in his *Ode to Duty*—

"There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:

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[1] Our English moralists are fond of referring to the opinions of "the plain man." But it depends a good deal on the *character* of "the plain man" whether his opinions on moral questions are worth considering.

[2] Kant's point of view might be illustrated by the famous declaration of Sir T. Browne in his *Religio Medici*: "I give no alms to satisfy the hunger of my brother, but to fulfil and accomplish the will and command of my God." Contrast this attitude with that of the philanthropist who is actuated simply by love of those whom he seeks to benefit, and it is at once evident, even to the plainest common sense, that the latter is immeasurably the higher of the two. Indeed, it would scarcely be a paradox to say that, in such cases, the more purely a man is guided by love, and the less conscious he is of performing a duty, the better his action is. But see next note.

Glad hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not."[1]

Kant, resting duty upon a formal principle of reason, does not recognize the possibility of such an attitude as this. This defect was early perceived by the poet Schiller, an ardent student of the Kantian system, who expressed his dissatisfaction in the form of an epigram. He supposes an ethical inquirer to bring the following difficulty before a Kantian philosopher—

"Willingly serve I my friends, but I do it, alas! with affection.
Hence I am plagued with the doubt, virtue I have not attained."

And he represents him as receiving the following answer—

"This is your only resource, you must stubbornly seek to abhor them.
Then you can do with disgust that which the law may enjoin."

Of course this is a gross exaggeration of Kant's position; for he would not demand the presence of abhorrence, nor even the absence of affection. Still, it is true that he did not recognize the possibility of the performance of duty

[1] Schiller has an even more emphatic utterance on the same point in his poem *Der Genius*, beginning, "Must I distrust my impulse?" and ending, "What thou pleasest to do, is thy law." His criticism is more philosophically expressed in the treatise, *Ueber Anmuth und Würde*, where he says, among other things, that "Man not only *may* but *should* bring pleasure and duty into relation to one another; he should obey his reason with joy." Of course, it would be easy to carry all this to the opposite extreme from that represented by Kant; and perhaps Kant's is the less dangerous extreme of the two. The over-indulgent parent, for instance, cannot be justified by a mere appeal to an impulse of affection. All that we are entitled to say is that a man will often be led to the performance of duty by affection far more effectively than by the consciousness of law, and that duty so performed does not thereby cease to be duty; and further, that the highest forms of duty, involving love, are not compatible with the absence of affection, and cannot be satisfactorily done from mere respect for law. *Cf.* Janet's *Theory of Morals*, Book III., chap. v.; and see below, pp. 70 and 84, and chap. xi., § 10.

from feeling as contrasted with the performance of it from the mere sense of duty given by the moral reason.

(*b*) Another respect in which the rigour of Kant's point of view appears, is this, that he permits of no exceptions to his moral imperatives. Now the moral sense of the best men seems to say that there is no commandment, however sacred (unless it be the commandment of love), that does not under certain circumstances release its claims. This objection was very forcibly put by Jacobi in an indignant protest against the Kantian system, which he addressed to Fichte.[1] "Yes," he exclaims, "I am the Atheist, the Godless one, who, in spite of the will that wills nothing, am ready to lie as the dying Desdemona lied; to lie and deceive like Pylades, when he pretended to be Orestes; to murder like Timoleon; to break law and oath like Epaminondas, like John de Witt; to commit suicide with Otho and sacrilege with David,—yea, to rub the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, merely because I am hungry, and because *the law is made for the sake of man and not man for the sake of the law*. I am that Godless one, and I deride the philosophy that calls me Godless for such

[1] It may be observed that Fichte himself, though a disciple of Kant, laid stress chiefly on the Kantian *dictum* that "an erring conscience is a chimera," and regarded the command to "follow conscience" as the supreme moral principle. He regarded conscience, moreover, not as a principle which lays down merely formal imperatives, but rather as one which bids us advance along the line of rational development. Fichte was thus rather a representative of the school of idealistic evolution, referred to below in chap. vii. For this reason, Janet remarks (*Theory of Morals*, p. 264) that Jacobi ought to have regarded Fichte as essentially in agreement with himself. For Jacobi also appealed to the heart or moral sense of the individual. But surely what Fichte meant by the "conscience" was a *rational* and *universal* principle of guidance, very different from a mere heart or moral sense. *Cf.* Adamson's *Fichte*, pp. 193 *sqq.*; Schwegler's *History of Philosophy*, pp. 273-4; Erdmann's *History of Philosophy*, vol. ii., pp. 514-16.

reasons, both it and its Supreme Being; for with the holiest certitude that I have in me, I know that the prerogative of pardon in reference to such transgressions of the letter of the absolute law of reason, is the characteristic royal right of man, the seal of his dignity and of his divine nature." Jacobi held, therefore, that man is not called upon to act "in blind obedience to the law." He is entitled to appeal from pure reason to the heart, which is indeed the only "faculty of ideas that are not empty." "This heart," he says, "the Transcendental Philosophy will not be allowed to tear out of my breast, in order to set a pure impulse of Egoism in its place. I am not one to allow myself to be freed from the dependence of love, in order to have my blessedness in pride alone."

To what extent this view of Jacobi is justifiable, will probably become more apparent as we proceed. In reality, it is quite as one-sided as the view of Kant to which it is opposed. It calls attention, however, to the undue rigour of Kant's principle, in admitting of no exceptions to his moral imperatives. But indeed, even apart from such considerations as Jacobi has adduced, it must be tolerably apparent that the rigour of the Kantian system, in excluding all exceptions, overshoots the mark. For many actions in ordinary life are right simply because they *are* exceptions. Many instances of heroic self-sacrifice would be unjustifiable if every one were to perform them. When it is right for a man to devote his life to a great cause, it is usually right just because it may be assumed that no one else will do it. Or take the case of celibacy.[1] For every one to abstain

[1] *Cf.* Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book IV., chap. v., § 3.; and Abbott's translation of Kant's *Theory of Ethics*, pp. liii *sqq*. The student should observe carefully where the inconsistency comes in here—*viz.* in the *principle* (or maxim) itself, not in its mere *results*.

from marriage would be inconsistent with the continuance of the human race on earth; consequently, any one who abstained from marriage *for the sake of some benefit to posterity* would, from Kant's point of view, be acting inconsistently; yet it seems clear that it is not the duty of every one to marry, and even that it is the duty of some to abstain,—and to abstain, too, *for the sake of posterity.*

It appears, then, that the Kantian principle, interpreted in this way, is much too stringent. On the other hand, if we were to accept the other interpretation, it would be too lax. For it would then admit of every conceivable exception that we could will to be universally allowed under precisely similar conditions; and this would include everything that human beings do,[1] except when they are consciously doing what they know cannot be justified by any rational plea.

§ **10**. Real Significance of the Kantian Principle.—We must not, however, conclude from this that the Kantian principle is to be entirely rejected. There is a sense in which it is a quite complete criterion of the rightness of an action to ask whether it can be consistently carried out. Our moral action is in this respect exactly similar to our intellectual life. An error cannot be consistently carried out, and neither can a sin. But in both cases alike the test is not that of mere *formal* consistency. We may take up an erroneous idea and hold consistently to it, so long as we confine ourselves to that particular idea. The inconsistency comes in only when we try to fit the erroneous idea into

[1] For instance, a man might be dishonest in business, and justify himself by saying that the principle on which he acted was, that a shrewd man is entitled to overreach a careless one. If he had perfect confidence in his own shrewdness, he might be quite willing that this principle should be universally carried out; and at the same time he might uphold the general principle of respect for the rights of others, subject only to this particular limitation.

the scheme of the world as a whole. It is with that scheme that error is inconsistent. In like manner in our moral life we may take up a false principle of action, and we may carry it out consistently, and even will that all others should act in accordance with it, so long as we confine our attention to that particular action and its immediate consequences. But so soon as we go beyond this, and consider its bearing on the whole scheme of life, it becomes apparent that we could not will that it should be universalized. The reason is, not that the action is inconsistent with itself, but rather that it is inconsistent with *the self*—*i. e.* with the unity of our lives as a systematic whole.[1] But then we have at once to ask —How are we to know what is and what is not consistent with this unity? What can we, and what can we not, desire to see universally carried out? This question cannot be answered by any mere consideration of formal consistency. We must inquire into the nature of our desires—*i. e.* we must introduce *matter* as well as *form*. We must ask, in other words, what is the nature of the self with which we have to be consistent.

In order to answer this question, we must proceed in the next chapter to investigate the nature of Will and Desire.

[1] It should be observed that Kant to some extent advanced towards the point of view here indicated; especially by his conception of Humanity as an absolute end, and still more by the pregnant idea of all rational beings as constituting a *Kingdom* of ends. *Metaphysic of Morals*, Sect. II. (Abbott's translation, pp. 46—59). But the persistent dualism of Kant's system prevented him from recognizing the full significance of the advance which he had thus suggested; and his principle remained formal after all. *Cf.* Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii., pp. 218—226. For a more recent criticism of Kant's ethical position, see Simmel's *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, Vol. II., chap. v.

NOTE ON KANT.

Kant's view is rightly characterized by Bradley (*Ethical Studies*, Essay IV.) as that of "Duty for Duty's Sake,"[1] and is contrasted with the utilitarian view (Essay III.), which is described as that of "Pleasure for Pleasure's Sake." Professor Dewey, in like manner, describes the Kantian system (*Outlines of Ethics*, p. 78) as furnishi with merely "Formal Ethics," and as being a "theory which attempts to find the good not only in the will itself, but in the will irrespective of any end to be reached by the will." Mr. Muirhead (*Elements of Ethics*, p. 112 *sqq.*) has also described the Kantian theory in similar terms, referring both to Bradley and to Dewey; but he has carried Bradley's antithesis between the Kantian Ethics and utilitarianism to a somewhat extreme point, even going so far as to characterize the Kantian view of the supreme good by means of the heading, "The End as Self-Sacrifice." This appears to me to be an exaggeration. Kant considered that we must do our duty out of pure respect for the law of reason, and not from any anticipation of pleasure; but he nowhere, so far as I am aware, suggests that there is any merit in the *absence* of pleasure. On the contrary, though he does not regard happiness as the direct end at which the virtuous man is to aim, he yet believes that, in any complete account of the supreme human good, happiness must be included as well as virtue—though in subordination to virtue. Indeed, he even considered that, unless we had grounds for believing that the two elements—virtue and happiness—are ultimately to be found united, the very foundation of morality would be destroyed. Thus he says,[2] "In the *summum bonum* which is practical for us, *i. e.* to be realized by our will, virtue and happiness are thought as necessarily combined, so that the one cannot be assumed by pure practical reason without the other also being attached to it. Now this combination (like every other) is either *analytical* or *synthetical*. It has been shown that it cannot be analytical;[3] it must then be synthetical, and more particularly,

[1] It should be noted, however, that the account given by Mr. Bradley in this chapter of the theory of "Duty for Duty's Sake" is not, and is not intended to be, an exact statement of the position of Kant.

[2] *Critique of Practical Reason*, Part I., Book II., chap. ii., § 1. Abbott's translation of Kant's *Theory of Ethics*, third edition, p. 209.

[3] *I. e.* that happiness is not directly included in virtue, or virtue in happiness.

must be conceived as the connection of cause and effect, since it concerns a practical good, *i. e.* one that is possible by means of action; consequently either the desire of happiness must be the motive to maxims of virtue,[1] or the maxim of virtue must be the efficient cause of happiness. The first is *absolutely* impossible, because (as was proved in the Analytic) maxims which place the determining principle of the will in the desire of personal happiness are not moral at all, and no virtue can be founded on them. But the second is *also impossible*, because the practical connection of causes and effects in the world, as the result of the determination of the will, does not depend upon the moral dispositions of the will, but on the knowledge of the laws of nature and the physical power to use them for one's purposes; consequently we cannot expect in the world by the most punctilious observance of the moral laws any necessary connection of happiness with virtue, adequate to the *summum bonum*. Now as the promotion of this *summum bonum*, the conception of which contains this connection, is *à priori* a necessary object of our will, and inseparably attached to the moral law, the impossibility of the former must prove the falsity of the latter. If then the supreme good is not possible by practical rules, then the moral law also which commands us to promote it is directed to vain imaginary ends, and must consequently be false."

Kant's view, then, was that the supreme aim of the virtuous man is simply that of conforming to this law of reason—*i. e.*, according to him, the law of formal consistency. He must not pursue virtue *for the sake of happiness*, but purely for the sake of duty. In this sense Kant inculcates self-sacrifice. But he does not regard self-sacrifice as the *end*. The end is conformity to law, obedience to reason. Further, Kant considers that though the virtuous man does not aim at happiness, yet the complete well-being[2] of a human being includes happiness as well as virtue. And apparently he thought that if we had no ground for believing that the two elements are ultimately conjoined, the ground of

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[1] *This* is what Kant denies; and it is only in this sense that he is fairly to be described as an ascetic, or as one who advocates self-sacrifice.

[2] *Complete* well-being (*bonum consummatum*) as distinguished from *supreme* well-being (*supremum bonum*). The *supreme* good is virtue: the *complete* good is virtue + happiness. See *Critique of Practical Reason*, Part I., Book II., chap. ii. (Abbott's translation, p. 206). For a discussion of Kant's view on this point, see Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, Book II., chap. v. (vol. ii. pp. 289—314).

morality itself would be removed. For morality rests on a demand of reason; and the possibility of attaining the *summum bonum* is also a demand of reason. If the demands of reason were chimerical in the latter case, they would be equally discredited in the former.[1] He solves the difficulty by postulating the existence of God, "as the necessary condition of the possibility of the *summum bonum*."[2]

From this it will be seen that Kant did not really regard self-sacrifice as the end. Indeed it may be doubted whether it has ever been regarded as an end by any serious school of moralists. Bentham, indeed (at least as represented by Dumont[3]), contrasts his utilitarian theory with what he calls "the Ascetic Principle," saying of the latter that "those who follow it have a horror of pleasures. Everything which gratifies the senses, in their view, is odious and criminal. They found morality upon privations, and virtue upon the renouncement of one's self. In one word, the reverse of the partisans of utility, they approve everything which tends to diminish enjoyment, they blame everything which tends to augment it." But this description would evidently not apply to Kant,[4] nor perhaps to any school of moralists, if we except some of the extremest of the Cynics.[5] Bentham himself, in the passage from which the above extract is taken, does not refer to any philosophic writers, but only to the Jansenists and some other theologians. Even the Stoics[6] (to whom certainly Kant bears a strong resemblance[7]) did

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[1] Observe the close resemblance between Kant's view on this point and that of Butler. See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 195-7. Kant, however, states the difficulty in a much more precise and profound form than that in which it is put by Butler. Kant's attempted solution, in like manner, is characterized by immeasurably greater speculative depth.

[2] Kant, *loc. cit.*, section V. (Abbott, p. 221).

[3] *Theory of Legislation*, chap. ii. See also *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. ii.

[4] There is, indeed, a passage in the *Methodology of Pure Practical Reason* (Abbott's translation, p. 254), in which Kant says that virtue is "worth so much only because it costs so much." But the context shows that his meaning is merely that the cost brings clearly to light the purity of the motive.

[5] See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 33-35.

[6] For an account of the Stoics, see Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 70—85.

[7] *Cf.* Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii., pp. 222-3, &c.

not regard the sacrifice of happiness as in itself a good. On the contrary, as Kant himself remarks,[1] both the Stoics and Epicureans were agreed in identifying virtue with happiness: only while the Epicureans held that the pursuit of happiness is virtue, the Stoics held, contrariwise, that the pursuit of virtue is happiness.[2]

I have thought it desirable to dwell on this slight divergence between my view on this point and that stated in Mr. Muirhead's *Elements*, not for the purpose of emphasizing my disagreement, but rather to bring out the fundamental identity of our views. For if the reader will turn to the passage in Mr. Muirhead's book, I think he will easily see that the difference between us is merely superficial. Although Mr. Muirhead treats of the Kantian Ethics under the heading "The End as Self-Sacrifice," and refers to it as illustrating the ascetic principle in morals, yet his actual treatment of Kant's fundamental position does not, I think, materially differ from that suggested in the present manual. I am convinced, therefore, that our divergence on this point is little more than verbal.

It is perhaps fair to add here that a partial reply to Schiller's objections (referred to above, p. 62) was made by Kant in his treatise on *Religion within the Bounds of mere Reason*.[3] Kant there admits that a thoroughly virtuous man will love virtuous activities, and perform them with pleasure; but he regards this as a mere *result* of action from the sense of duty. The man who acts from a sense of duty has a feeling of pleasure gradually superinduced. This admission obviates the grosser forms of the criticism that has been passed on Kant with regard to this point; but it still leaves a fatal dualism between the law of reason and the affections of human kindness. In short, it still has the defect of emphasizing the mere isolated *good will*, instead of the *good character*.[4] *Cf.* below, p. 84.

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[1] *Critique of Practical Reason*, Part I., Book II., chap. ii. (Abbott's translation, p. 208).

[2] Or at least that a certain form of happiness is an inseparable accident of the pursuit of virtue. See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 83-4.

[3] *Cf.* also *Metaphysical Elements of Ethics* (Abbott's translation), pp. 312-13.

[4] The point that it is specially important to remember is, that Kant always insists that duty must not be done *from* inclination. He never denies that it may be done *with* inclination. Consequently, he is not properly an ascetic.

CHAPTER V.

WILL AND DESIRE.

Τοῖς μὲν οὖν πολλοῖς τὰ ἡδέα μάχεται διὰ τὸ μὴ φύσεἰ τοιαῦτ' εἶναι, τοῖς δὲ φιλοκάλοις ἐστὶν ἡδέα τὰ φύσει ἡδέα.[1]—ARISTOTLE.

§ 1. GENERAL NATURE OF DESIRE.—Before we consider the way in which our desires are related to the will, it is necessary to determine precisely what we are to understand by the term desire. We must not, for instance, confound human desires with the mere appetites of an animal; and there are also several other minor distinctions which it is necessary to keep in view. We may say, generally, that nothing is an object of desire for a man unless it is consciously regarded as a good: but this remark is perhaps not very enlightening; for it would be difficult to define a *good* otherwise than as an object that is consciously desired.[2] The point is, however, that in all real desire there is some object that is consciously taken as an end. Such an object consciously taken as an end in desire is what we call a good. By defining in this way, we seem to be able to avoid going round in a circle. In order to understand this point, however, it is necessary to go more into the details of the distinction between desire and other modes of activity. We

[1] ("While with most men there is a perpetual conflict between the several things in which they find pleasure, since these are not naturally pleasant, those who love what is noble take pleasure in that which is naturally pleasant.")

[2] *Cf.* Aristotle's *Ethics*, I. i. 1.: "The good is that at which all things aim."

may conveniently begin with those forms of activity that are lowest in the scale of life, and pass upwards from these to the highest forms of human desire and will.

§ 2. WANT AND APPETITE.—We may begin by distinguishing the appetite of an animal from the mere presence of an animal want. An animal want is in itself of the same nature as a vegetable want. It is a blind tendency towards particular ends, which are involved in the development of the life of the animal, just as they might be also in the life of a plant. We may say, if we like, that nature wills[1] the realization of these ends; but they are not consciously willed by the animal or plant itself. In the case of an appetite, on the other hand, there is not merely a blind tendency towards a particular end; but this tendency is to a certain extent present to consciousness. This consciousness appears partly in the form of a definite presentation of the kind of object that will satisfy a given want. The hungry lion is no doubt more or less clearly aware of the nature of the object that it seeks. The plant, on the other hand, when it turns to the sunlight, may be said to have a want; but it cannot be supposed to have any consciousness of the nature of the object that will satisfy it. Even in the case of an animal appetite, however, the consciousness of the object is probably in most instances somewhat dim and vague. The most prominent element in the consciousness is rather the feeling of pleasure or pain than any definite presentation of an object. An unsatisfied appetite is in itself[2] painful;

[1] This conception is due to Aristotle. It is of course partly metaphorical, but suggests a teleological view of the world.

[2] It is necessary to say "in itself"; because the total effect of a consciousness of unsatisfied want is sometimes rather pleasurable than painful. Thus, moderate hunger in man, and perhaps even in animals, seems often to be rather agreeable than otherwise. The reason is probably in part that the feeling of hunger adds a pleasant stimulus to the

whereas the satisfaction of any appetite brings with it the feeling of pleasure. These feelings form so characteristic and prominent an element in animal appetites that satisfactions of appetite are frequently referred to simply as pleasures, while unsatisfied appetites are called pains. A pleasure-seeker is generally understood to be one who seeks the satisfaction of his animal appetites, or of human impulses which are akin to these appetites. A certain confusion is thus apt to arise between the satisfaction of an appetite and the agreeable feeling which accompanies it; since both are called pleasure. But with this confusion we need not at present trouble ourselves.[1] It is enough now to observe that pleasure and pain are the most prominent and characteristic features of animal appetite.

§ **3**. APPETITE AND DESIRE.—In the case of what is strictly called desire, there is not merely the consciousness of an object with an accompanying feeling of pleasure and pain, but also a recognition of the object as a good, or as an element in a more or less clearly defined end.[2] The hunger of an animal is different from the mere want of nutriment in a plant; but desire for food in a man is scarcely less different from mere hunger. A man may be hungry and yet not desire food. In the desire of food there is involved, in addition to the hunger, the representation of the food as an end which it is worth while to secure. We may express this by saying that desire implies a definite *point of view*, whereas there is no such implication in a mere appetite.

vital energies generally, and in part that the anticipation of satisfaction is easily called up by the consciousness of want. See Note I. at the end of chap. vi., p. 117.

[1] See below, chap. vi., § 5.

[2] For a full discussion of this point, see Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book II., chap. ii. *Cf.* also Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 50, and Dewey's *Psychology*, p. 360 *sqq*.

Hunger is to all intents the same phenomenon in the brute and in the sage; but the desires of the sage and the hero are very different from those of the savage, the miser, or the epicure. The desires of different men are determined by the total nature of the point of view which the men occupy. What they desire depends on what they like; and what they like, as Mr. Ruskin is so fond of insisting, is an exact expression of what they are. Thus, while ordinary hunger or thirst tells us nothing about the character of him who feels it, the hunger and thirst after righteousness, or after power, or after fame, is a revelation of a whole point of view.[1] The desires of a person, therefore, are not an isolated phenomenon, but form an element in the totality, or, as we may say, the *universe* of his character;[2] and it is from this point of view that we must regard them, if we are to understand their full significance.

§ 4. UNIVERSE OF DESIRE.—What is meant by saying that the desires of a human being form part of a "universe" may be made somewhat clearer by reference to a similar conception in the science of Logic. It has become a familiar thing in Logic to speak of a "universe of discourse,"[3] as signifying the sphere of reference within which a particular statement is made. Thus a statement about "the gods" may be true with reference to the world as depicted in the Homeric poems, or to the world of Greek mythology generally, but may be false or meaningless if understood with reference to the world of ordinary fact. So too we may make statements about griffins and unicorns in the universe of heraldry, about fairies in the universe of

[1] *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 49.

[2] *Cf.* Dewey's *Psychology*, pp. 363-4.

[3] See Keynes's *Formal Logic*, pp. 137-8, Venn's *Empirical Logic*, p. 180, Welton's *Manual of Logic*, vol. i., pp. 72-3.

romance, about Hamlet or King Lear in the universe of Shakspere's plays, about Heaven and Hell and Purgatory in the universe of Dante's *Divine Comedy;* and our statements may be true within these several universes, though they would become false if taken out of the particular universe to which they belong. Now there is something quite analogous in the case of our desires. Each desire also belongs to a particular universe, and loses its meaning if we pass out of that universe into another. This universe to which a desire belongs is the universe that is constituted by the totality of what we call a man's *character*, as that character presents itself at the time at which the desire is felt. It is, in short, the universe of the man's ethical *point of view* at the moment in question. That there are great differences between such universes, is evident from the judgments that we habitually pass on the representations of human conduct in poems and novels and dramas. We are often aware that a desire which is attributed to a fictitious personage is not such a desire as a man of his general character and situation would feel, or at least not such as he would feel in such a degree as is attributed to him. It is not such a desire, in fact, as belongs to his particular universe. And the particular universe which we thus estimate, and which varies so widely with the characters of different individuals, is not even one that remains constant for the same person. We must all be aware of the different desires that dominate our minds in different moods, in different conditions, in different states of health. These differences constitute what we may call a difference of universe; and to each such universe a different set of desires, or at least a different arrangement of desires, belongs. This universe may even alter suddenly in the same individual, through some sudden transformation of conditions. It is

such a change that is illustrated in the old fable of the cat which was transformed into a princess, but returned again to its proper shape on the sudden appearance of a mouse. The sudden change of condition caused her to drop at once from the universe of princess to the universe of cat. Of such transformations life is rich in instances. There is a German proverb that what one wishes in youth one has to satiety in age; but even from year to year and from day to day—sometimes even from hour to hour—we may find ourselves passing from one universe into another, where what we formerly desired becomes uninteresting, perhaps even disgusting. Any sudden change—the news of the death of a friend, the recollection of a promise, the suggestion of a moral principle, and the like—may carry us instantaneously from one world into another. This is illustrated in Shakspere's play of *Love's Labour's Lost*, where the announcement of the death of the King of France brings suddenly to a close the wit and levity of the preceding scenes, and introduces an entirely different tone. Such a change may fairly be referred to as a passage from one universe to another. Or again, such a change may be illustrated by the common transformation from a man's Sunday view of life to that which he takes during the rest of the week. Even a change of clothes suffices with some men to produce a change of universe; for it is not always entirely true that "the cowl does not make the monk."

§ 5. Conflict of Desires.—In the preceding section we have assumed, for the sake of simplicity, that at any given moment an individual occupies a definite point of view, or is, so to speak, an inhabitant of a single universe. In reality, however, the content of an individual's consciousness is not so simple. There are nearly always several points of view present to a given individual at a given

moment; or, at any rate, several points of view alternate with one another so rapidly, that they may practically be regarded as present together. A statesman, for instance, may be influenced in his conduct by motives derived from many different universes. He may occupy the universe which is constituted by the consideration of the good of his country; and from this point of view he may strongly desire to see certain measures carried out. But at the same time he may be not uninfluenced by considerations drawn from very different universes. He may occupy also a universe constituted by his own personal ambition, by the welfare of his family, by the wishes of his constituency, by a view of duty to the world (as distinguished from his own country), perhaps also by religious considerations. He may occupy alternately, and almost simultaneously, all these different points of view; and very various desires may arise in his mind in consequence. It is probable that some of these desires will conflict with others. From one point of view he may desire peace, from another war: from one point of view he may set his heart on liberty, from another on order. It then comes to be a question which of these ends the man will finally choose. Now it is often said that in such cases a man will naturally, or even necessarily, be influenced by the strongest desire or motive. But it must be observed that this mode of statement is misleading. It implies that a desire is an isolated thing; whereas in reality it forms part of a universe or system. Consequently, the real strength of a desire does not depend on its own individual liveliness or force, but rather on the force of the universe or system to which it belongs. Thus a man might be strongly desirous of war from a feeling of hatred towards a foreign power. But if the man were of such a character that the sense of duty was more dominant in him than the

feeling of personal hatred, he might decide for peace, though the desire for peace in itself did not strongly influence him. The latter desire would conquer, not because it was in itself the stronger, but because it formed a part of a stronger universe or system.[1] Of course a strong desire gives strength to the universe to which it belongs; but the final triumph of a desire depends not on its own individual dominance, but on the dominance of its universe. How in particular individuals one universe comes to be dominant rather than another, is a question rather for Psychology than for Ethics. In so far as it concerns Ethics, it will be touched upon in a future section of this book.[2] In the meantime, what it is important to note is merely that a desire is not an isolated phenomenon but a part of a system; and that consequently a conflict of desires is in reality a conflict between two or more universes of desire.[3]

§ 6. Desire and Wish.—The terms "desire" and "wish" are frequently used as synonymous; but there is a slight difference in the usage of the terms, and it seems desirable

[1] *Cf.* Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book II., chap. i., § 105, p. 108.

[2] See chap. xii., § 7, and chap. xiv.

[3] *Cf.* Dewey's *Psychology*, pp. 364-5: "It is important to notice that it is a strife or conflict which goes on in the man himself; *it is a conflict of himself with himself* [*i. e.*, in our language, a conflict of himself as one universe with himself as another universe]; it is not a conflict of himself with something external to him, nor of one impulse with another impulse, he meanwhile remaining a passive spectator awaiting the conclusion of the struggle. What gives the conflict of desires its whole meaning is that it represents the man at strife with himself. He is the opposing contestants as well as the battle-field." This last expression was no doubt suggested to Prof. Dewey by a very striking passage in Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion* (I. 64), in which he says: "I am not one of the combatants, but rather both of the combatants and also the combat itself"; or, as Principal Caird renders it (*Philosophy of Religion*, chap. ix., p. 262): "I am at once the combatants and the conflict and the field that is torn with the strife."

to employ them in Ethics in distinct senses. We may say briefly that a wish is an effective desire. The meaning of this will be more apparent when it is considered in relation to what has just been said with regard to universes of desire and the conflict between them. It has been stated that any given desire belongs to a system or universe, and that various such systems may exist simultaneously and come into conflict with one another. When such conflicts occur, certain desires predominate over others; some are subordinated or sink into abeyance. Now it may be convenient to limit the term "wish" to those desires that predominate or continue to be effective. A hungry man may be said to have a desire for food; but this desire may be dominant only within the universe of animal inclination. The desire may be kept in abeyance by a sense of religious obligation, by devotion to work, or by some over-mastering passion. In such cases we may say that the man no longer *wishes* for food, though a desire for food continues to exist in his consciousness as an element in a subordinate universe—held, as it were, in leash. A desire, then, which has become ineffective, is not to be described as a wish.

§ 7. WISH AND WILL.—If it is important to distinguish an effective wish from a mere latent desire, it is still more important to distinguish a wish from a definite act of will. It might seem at first that if a wish is a dominant desire it must always issue in will. But this is not the case. The reason is that a wish is often of an abstract character, directed towards some single element in a concrete event, without reference to the accompanying circumstances. In order, on the other hand, that an event may be willed, it has to be accepted in its concrete totality. When Lady Anne, in Shakspere's *King Richard III.*, says to the Duke of Gloucester,

"Though I wish thy death,
I will not be the executioner,"

the contrast between wish and will is well brought out. The wish for the death is a mere abstract wish, since it does not include the means by which the death might be brought about. On the other hand, when a total concrete effect is willed, it may include many elements that are not in themselves wished, and even elements to which the agent's wishes are strenuously opposed. This also may be illustrated from Shakspere. When the apothecary, in *Romeo and Juliet*, says to Romeo, on agreeing to sell him the poison,

"My poverty, but not my will, consents,"[1]

what he means is evidently that his *wish* does not consent. He does will the sale of the poison—he accepts that concrete act—but he wishes it were not necessary for him to do so. The dominant single desire, we may say, is opposed to the sale of the poison (*i. e.* if we assume that the apothecary was honest in his declaration); but the dominant universe of desire is that which is constituted by his poverty, and by this he is led to will the sale. Briefly, then, we may say that a wish is a dominant single desire; whereas the will depends on the dominance of a universe of desire.

§ 8. WILL AND ACT.—Another important distinction is that between the mere Will (*i. e.* the mere *intention*, *purpose*, or *resolution*) and the carrying of it into act. A resolution has always reference to something that is more or less future. Sometimes it refers to the *immediate* future, and is carried

[1] This passage is discussed in Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, § 143, p. 148. "The will," Green says, "is only the strong competing wish which does not suffice to determine action."

into effect at once. At other times it refers to the *remote* future, and remains in abeyance till the proper time arrives. In the latter case the purpose may never be carried into effect at all. An intention or resolution is always something more than a mere wish[1]: it is the definite acceptance of a concrete event as an object to be aimed at. But if this event is remote, the purpose may lie within one universe and the carrying of it out within another. When the time for action comes, the conditions may have changed. At the lowest there will be this change, that what was formerly presented merely in anticipative imagination is now presented as an actual fact. To resolve to make a confession, for instance, is one thing: actually to make it, in the presence of those to whom it has to be made, is often a very different thing. In the former case the accompanying circumstances are only presented in an imaginative and partly symbolic way: in the latter case they are actually present to sense. Now, the actual facts may not correspond to the anticipation. Those to whom the confession was to be made, for instance, may be found to be in a different mood from what was expected. And even if the anticipation proves substantially correct, still, in the actual presentation we may be impressed by accessory circumstances of which we had not taken any particular account. The man who resolves to get up at an early hour may not have thought particularly about the coldness of the morning air, or about the pleasantness of lying in bed; whereas, when the time comes, these may be among the most impressive circumstances. Or, again, when Lady Macbeth intended to murder Duncan, it did not occur to her that he might resemble her father. So, too, when Hamlet resolved to carry out the

[1] Hence we must somewhat modify the account of a mere intention, given above with reference to Kant, chap. iii., § 4.

behests of the Ghost, he did not think of all the doubts that might suggest themselves to his mind after the Ghost had vanished. Thus "enterprises of great pith and moment," as well as more insignificant designs, may be frustrated by a change of universe; and the "best intentions," or the worst, may lead to nothing.[1] This is especially true when the purpose is one that carries great consequences in its train, involving perhaps a complete change of the world within which we have been living. In such a case the changed world cannot be with any completeness imagined, and some very small circumstance may easily give a completely new turn to our thoughts. The "insurrection"[2] by which the universe within which we are living is to be overthrown cannot be at once carried out, and we cannot with any thoroughness think ourselves into the new conditions that are to arise. Thus a mere resolution is still far from being an *act*.[3] What is commonly called "force of will" means the power of carrying resolutions into act. This power depends largely on the habit of fixing our attention upon the salient features of an object that is aimed at, and not allowing ourselves to be distracted by subordinate conditions. Hence, narrow-minded or hard-hearted men have often more "force of will," in this sense, than those who take wider views. But

[1] *Cf.* below, chap. xiv., § 6.

[2] *Cf.* Shakspere's *Julius Cæsar*, Act II., scene i., ll. 63 *sqq.*—

"Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:
The Genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council; and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection."

[3] For an admirable summary of the elements involved in an act of will, see Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 46-7. *See* also Appendix B, Note III.

a wide-minded man may also acquire "force of will" by taking a clear and decided view of the circumstances that are important, and thus eliminating insignificant details.

§ **9.** Will and Character.—"A character," said Novalis, "is a completely fashioned will." Character may be said, in the language we have just been using, to consist in the continuous dominance of a definite universe. A man of good character is one in whom the universe of duty habitually predominates. A miser is one in whom the dominant universe is that which is constituted by the love of money. A fanatic is one in whom some particular universe is so entirely dominant as to shut out entirely other important points of view. And in like manner all other kinds of character may be described by reference to the nature of the universe that is dominant in them. When Pope said that "Most women have no characters at all," he meant that the universes of desire in which they live are so continually varying that no one of them can be said to be habitually dominant. And certainly it is the case that most men, as well as most women, cannot be accounted for by so simple an explanation as the exclusive dominance of such "ruling passions" as Pope dealt with. In the case of most actual human beings what we have is not so much any one universe that decidedly predominates as a number of universes that stand to one another in certain definite relations. The different relations in which they stand to one another constitute the differences of character. How it comes that now one, and now another, predominates, is, as we have already remarked, a question rather for Psychology than for Ethics.

§ **10.** The Good Will.—From the point of view that we have now reached, we may see that there is a certain inadequacy in the doctrine of Kant that the one good thing in the world is the Good Will. *We ought rather to say the*

Good Character. The accidental dominance of a good purpose at this or that moment is of comparatively little consequence unless it is an indication of the habitual dominance of a certain universe. Hence Aristotle rightly laid emphasis rather on the formation of Good Habit[1]—*i. e.*, in the language we have here adopted, on the establishment of a continuously dominant universe—than on the mere presence of a Good Will at any given moment. Will is, indeed, the expression of character, but it is the expression of it under the limitations of a particular time and place; and much may remain latent in the character which it would be necessary to take into account in forming a complete moral estimate of a given individual. This is well expressed in Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra*—

> "Not on the vulgar mass
> Called 'work' must sentence pass,
> Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
> . . . . . .
> But all, the world's coarse thumb
> And finger failed to plumb,
> So passed in making up the main account;
> All instincts immature,
> All purposes unsure,
> That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount.
> Thoughts hardly to be packed
> Into a narrow act,
> Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
> All I could never be,
> All, men ignored in me,
> This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

At the same time, it is true that "the tree is known by its fruit." The good character necessarily expresses itself in good acts of will.[2]

[1] *Ethics*, Book II. chap. v.

[2] From this point of view, we are able to get rid of the undue rigorism of Kant's system, and to connect virtue with pleasure. The good

§ **11.** Will and Reason.—Reference has just been made to Aristotle's view that the main thing in the moral life is the establishment of good habits. This view was put forward by Aristotle in opposition to the Socratic doctrine, that Virtue is a kind of Knowledge;[1] yet the two views are not so much opposed as might at first sight appear. Virtue is a kind of knowledge, as well as a kind of habit. It is, in fact, as we have already indicated, a point of view. The virtuous man is one who lives continuously in the universe which is constituted by duty. To live continuously in that universe is a habit; but it is at the same time a species of insight. The man who lives in a different universe sees things habitually in a different way—through a differently coloured glass, we might say. To be virtuous, therefore, is to possess habitually a certain kind of knowledge or insight. And thus both Socrates and Aristotle were right. Virtue is both a kind of knowledge and a kind of habit. Habit, in fact, in the sense in which the term is applied to moral character, is not mere custom. It is not on a level with habits such as our manner of walking or speaking or of wearing clothes. It is a *habit of willing.* Habits which

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character is one whose dominant interest lies in the highest universe. Such a character will find pleasure in acting in accordance with this interest. Hence Aristotle says (*Ethics*, I. viii. 12) that "a man is not good at all unless he takes pleasure in noble deeds. No one would call a man just who did not take pleasure in doing justice, nor generous who took no pleasure in acts of generosity, and so on." Further, a good man comes to live *habitually* within the highest universe, and is thus led to act virtuously *from inclination*, without definitely thinking of duty. Thus we are able to see the rational ground for the partly sentimental criticisms passed on Kant above, chap. iv., § 9.

[1] *Cf.* Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 24-5 and 54: and, for a fuller account of the doctrine of Socrates, see Zeller's *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, Part II., chap. vii.

have a moral significance are habits of deliberate choice.[1] Now deliberate choice depends on thought or reason.[2] In order to choose the right, in the sense in which such a choice has any moral significance, we must know the right. If we simply hit on the right course by chance, we do not really choose the right. Right willing, therefore, depends on true insight. Whether it is possible to have true insight without willing rightly is a further question, which we shall have to consider at a later stage. In the meantime we may partly see what Socrates meant by saying that virtue is a kind of knowledge. It depends on the occupation of a certain point of view, on the possession of a certain rational insight. At the same time, we see the truth of Aristotle's saying that virtue is habit. It is not merely a certain act of will, but a continuous state of character, a steadfast occupation of a definite universe.

§ 12. HIGHER AND LOWER FORMS OF DESIRE AND WILL. Throughout all the modes of statement that have preceded, it has been constantly assumed that certain forms of will are higher or better than others. This is, in fact, the fundamental assumption of Ethics. Now it follows from this that certain desires, or certain universes of desire, are higher or better than others. Thus it becomes a problem to determine why it is that any desire or universe of desires should be regarded as higher or better than any other. A complete answer to this question cannot be given at the present point in a way that would be quite intelligible or satisfactory. But a certain indication may be given of the direction in which an answer is to be sought. It is obvious that some universes are more comprehensive than others. If a man

[1] Ἔστιν ἄρα ἡ ἀρετὴ ἕξις προαιρετική ("Virtue, then, is a habit of choice").—Aristotle's *Ethics*, II. vi. 15.

[2] *Cf.* Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book II., chap. ii,

acts from the point of view of the happiness of his nation as a whole, this is evidently a more comprehensive point of view than that from which he acts when he has regard only to his own happiness. The former includes the latter. So too, if a man acts from the point of view of his own happiness throughout the year, he acts from a more comprehensive point of view than if he has regard only to the happiness of the passing hour. Now the narrower the point of view from which we act, the more certain we are to fall into inconsistency and self-contradiction. If the universe within which we act is merely that of the passing hour, that universe will no longer be the dominant one when the hour is past; and then we shall find ourselves acting from some different, and perhaps inconsistent point of view. If, on the other hand, the universe within which we act is broad and comprehensive, we may be able to maintain our point of view consistently through life, and also to apply it to the actions of others. The wider universe may, therefore, be regarded as higher or better than the narrower one, since it enables us to maintain a more consistent point of view in our actions. From this consideration we may partly see why it is that one universe is to be regarded as higher or better than another. Still, this does not make it quite clear. For sometimes when we prefer one universe to another, the former does not include the latter, and is not obviously wider than it. What is the ground of preference in such cases we shall consider at a later point in this inquiry. But in the meantime, it may be well to notice a plausible explanation of the preference, which we shall see reason afterwards to reject. In such a subject as Ethics, erroneous doctrines are often almost as instructive as those that are correct.

§ **13.** Satisfaction of Desires.—When a desire attains

the end to which it is directed, the desire is satisfied; and this satisfaction is attended by an agreeable feeling—a feeling of pleasure, enjoyment, or happiness. On the other hand, when the end of a desire is not attained, we have a disagreeable feeling—a feeling of pain, misery, or unhappiness. Now if we act within a wide universe, or within a universe that includes desires that are continually recurring throughout life, we shall be acting in such a way as to satisfy our desires with great frequency, and so to have many feelings of pleasure. On the other hand, if we act within a narrow universe, or one containing desires that do not often recur, we may have few satisfactions and a frequent occurrence of painful feelings. Now it seems plausible to say that, since what we aim at is the satisfaction of our desires, the best aim is that which will bring the greatest number of pleasures and the smallest number of pains. This consideration would supply us with a criterion of higher and lower universes. The highest universe within which we could act would be that which would supply us with the greatest number of pleasures and the smallest number of pains. The highest universe, in fact, would be that which is constituted by the consideration of our greatest happiness throughout life; or, if we consider others as well as ourselves, by the consideration of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. This view is plausible, and it will be worth while to consider it in the next chapter.[1]

[1] Observe that the contrast of wide and narrow universes here drawn is not intended as a final statement of the ground of moral preference. On the whole subject of "universes" reference may be made to Herbart's *Psychology*.

CHAPTER VI.

HAPPINESS.

"Beatitudo non est virtutis præmium, sed ipsa virtus."[1]—SPINOZA.

§ 1. VARIETIES OF HEDONISM.—Hedonism is the general term for those theories that regard happiness or pleasure as the supreme end of life. It is derived from the Greek word ἡδονή, meaning pleasure. These theories have taken many different forms. It has been held by some that men always *do* seek pleasure, *i. e.* that pleasure in some form is always the ultimate object of desire; whereas other Hedonists confine themselves to the view that men *ought* always to seek pleasure. The former theory has been called by Prof. Sidgwick *Psychological Hedonism*, because it simply affirms the seeking of pleasure as a psychological fact; whereas he describes the other theory as *Ethical Hedonism.* Again, some have held that what each man seeks, or ought to seek, is his own pleasure; while others hold that what each seeks, or ought to seek, is the pleasure of all human beings, or even of all sentient creatures. Prof. Sidgwick has called the former of these views *Egoistic Hedonism;* the latter, *Universalistic Hedonism.* The latter has also been called *Utilitarianism*—which, however, is a very inappropriate name.[2] Most of the earlier ethical Hedonists were also psychological Hedonists; but this latter view has now been

[1] ("Happiness is not the reward of virtue, but is virtue itself.")

[2] See below, § 9.

almost universally abandoned. Egoistic Hedonism has also been generally abandoned. Its chief upholders were the ancient Cyrenaics and Epicureans.[1] Some more modern writers, however,—such as Bentham and Mill—did not clearly distinguish between egoistic and universalistic Hedonism, and consequently, though in the main supporting only the latter, often seemed to be giving their adhesion to the former. The student must be careful to distinguish between these different kinds of Hedonism: otherwise great confusion will result.

§ 2. PSYCHOLOGICAL HEDONISM.—Psychological Hedonism is the theory that the ultimate object of desire is pleasure. The best known exponent of this doctrine is John Stuart Mill.[2] In the fourth chapter of his book on *Utilitarianism* he reasons in the following way. "And now to decide whether this is really so; whether mankind do desire nothing for itself but that which is a pleasure to them, or of which the absence is a pain; we have evidently arrived at a question of fact and experience, dependent, like all similar questions, upon evidence. It can only be determined by practised self-consciousness and self-observation, assisted by observation of others. I believe that these sources of

[1] For an account of these see Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 32-3, and pp. 82-90. See also Zeller's *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, and *Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics*. Prof. Wallace's little volume on *Epicureanism* ("Chief Ancient Philosophies") is a most delightful book, which every student ought to read.

[2] Nearly all Hedonists, however, especially egoistic Hedonists, have with more or less clearness adopted this position. For a general historical exposition of the hedonistic point of view, the student may be referred to Lecky's *History of European Morals*, chap. i. The chief living exponent of psychological Hedonism is Professor Bain. See his *Mental and Moral Science*, Book IV., chap. iv., and *The Emotions and the Will*, "The Will," chap. viii. Dr. Bain, however, admits that it is possible, "for moments," to aim at other things than pleasure,

evidence, impartially consulted, will declare that desiring a thing and finding it pleasant, aversion to it and thinking of it as painful, are phenomena entirely inseparable, or rather two parts of the same phenomenon; in strictness of language, two different modes of naming the same psychological fact: that to think of an object as desirable (except for the sake of its consequences), and to think of it as pleasant, are one and the same thing; and that to desire anything, except in proportion as the idea of it is pleasant, is a physical and metaphysical impossibility." This passage has been well criticized by Dr. Sidgwick in his *Methods of Ethics* (Book I., chap. iv.). He says—"Mill explains that 'desiring a thing and finding it pleasant, are, in strictness of language, two modes of naming the same psychological fact.' If this be the case, it is hard to see how the proposition we are discussing requires to be determined by 'practised self-consciousness and self-observation'; as the denial of it would involve a contradiction in terms. The truth is that there is an ambiguity in the word Pleasure, which has always tended seriously to confuse the discussion of this question. When we speak of a man doing something at his own 'pleasure,' or as he 'pleases,' we usually signify the mere fact of choice or preference; the mere determination of the will in a certain direction. Now, if by 'pleasant' we mean that which influences choice, exercises a certain attractive force on the will, it is an assertion incontrovertible because tautological, to say that we desire what is pleasant—or even that we desire a thing in proportion as it appears pleasant." This would mean simply that we desire it in proportion as we desire it; because "appears pleasant" means simply "is desired by us." But, as Dr. Sidgwick goes on to say, if we understand "pleasure" in a more exact sense, it is not obvious that what we desire is always

pleasure. If we take pleasure to mean the agreeable feeling which attends the satisfaction of our wants, it is not by any means evident that this is always what we desire. On the contrary, it seems evident rather that this is *not* always what we desire.

§ 3. THE OBJECT OF DESIRE. (1) *The Paradox of Hedonism.*—In the part of the *Methods of Ethics* to which reference has just been made, Dr. Sidgwick goes on to argue that in fact what we desire is very frequently some objective end, and not the accompanying pleasure. He points out that even when we do desire pleasure, the best way to *get* it is often to *forget* it. If we think about the pleasure itself, we are almost sure to miss it; whereas if we direct our desires towards objective ends, the pleasure comes of itself. This is not true of all pleasures. It is true chiefly of the "pleasures of pursuit."[1] "Take, for example," says Dr. Sidgwick, "the case of any game which involves—as most games do—a contest for victory. No ordinary player before entering on such a contest, has any desire for victory in it: indeed he often finds it difficult to imagine himself deriving gratification from such victory, before he has actually engaged in the competition. What he deliberately, before the game begins, desires is not victory, but the pleasant excitement of the struggle for it; only for the full development of this pleasure a transient desire to win the game is generally indispensable. This desire, which does not exist at first, is stimulated to considerable intensity by the competition itself." "A certain degree of disinterestedness seems to be necessary in order to obtain full enjoyment. A man who maintains throughout an epicurean mood, fixing his aim on his own pleasure, does not catch the full spirit of the chase; his eagerness

[1] See Note I at the end of this chapter, p. 117.

never gets just the sharpness of edge which imparts to the pleasure its highest zest. Here comes into view what we may call the fundamental paradox of Hedonism, that the impulse towards pleasure, if too predominant, defeats its own aim. This effect is not visible, or at any rate is scarcely visible, in the case of passive sensual pleasures. But of our active enjoyments generally . . . . it may certainly be said that we cannot attain them, at least in their highest degree, so long as we concentrate our aim on them." "Similarly, the pleasures of thought and study can only be enjoyed in the highest degree by those who have an ardour of curiosity which carries the mind temporarily away from self and its sensations. In all kinds of Art, again, the exercise of the creative faculty is attended by intense and exquisite pleasures; but in order to get them, one must forget them." This "paradox of Hedonism," that in order to get pleasure it is necessary to seek something else, was to some extent recognized even by Mill; but he does not seem to have perceived that it is inconsistent with the view that desire is always directed towards pleasure. Desire can evidently be, at least temporarily, directed not towards pleasure, but towards certain objective ends.

§ **4.** THE OBJECT OF DESIRE. (2) *Wants prior to Satisfactions.*—We must next notice another point, which was brought out chiefly by Butler[1] and Hutcheson, though some subsequent writers have ignored it—*viz.* that many kinds of pleasure would not exist at all, if they were not preceded by certain desires for objects. Take, for instance, the pleasures of the benevolent affections. No one could possibly feel these pleasures unless he were first benevolent

[1] See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 192; and *cf.* Green's edition of Hume, vol. ii., Introd., p. 26, Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, § 161, p. 167, Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii., p. 230, *note*.

—*i. e.* had a desire for the welfare of others. In such a case, therefore, the very existence of the pleasure depends on the fact that desire is first directed towards something other than pleasure. It might even be argued that this is the case with all pleasures. Pleasure ensues upon the satisfaction of certain wants, and the wants must be prior to the satisfactions. We have a "disinterested" desire for food, before we can have a desire for the pleasure that accompanies the taking of food. From this consideration also it appears that there are some desires which are not desires for pleasure.

§ 5. THE OBJECT OF DESIRE. (3) *Pleasures and Pleasure.* At the same time it must be allowed that there is a certain plausibility in Mill's statements, and we must endeavour to account for this plausibility. It seems to arise from an ambiguity[1] in the word "pleasure." Pleasure is sometimes understood to mean agreeable *feeling*, or the feeling of satisfaction, and sometimes it is understood to mean an *object* that gives satisfaction. The hearing of music is sometimes said to be a pleasure: but of course the hearing of music is not a feeling of satisfaction; it is an object that gives satisfaction. Generally it may be observed that when we speak of "pleasures" in the plural, or rather in the concrete, we mean objects that give satisfaction; whereas when we speak of "pleasure" in the abstract we more often mean the feeling of satisfaction which such objects bring with them.[2] But this is not always the case.

Perhaps this distinction is more obvious in the case of pain than in the case of pleasure. Pain is generally understood

[1] A *second* ambiguity. Another ambiguity, pointed out by Dr. Sidgwick, has been already referred to; see p. 91.

[2] *Cf.* Dr. Ward's article on "Psychology" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, p. 71.

as the negative of pleasure, *i. e.* as meaning disagreeable feeling, or feeling of dissatisfaction. But when we speak of "pains" we usually mean objects that produce a disagreeable feeling; and indeed we usually mean objects of a definite kind—*viz.* organic sensations. The pain of toothache, for instance, is not merely a feeling of disagreeableness or dissatisfaction, but a definite sensation. That sensation is an object, and it is an object which brings with it a feeling of disagreeableness. The sensation of burning is another object; the sensation of a stunning blow is another object; the consciousness of having acted wrongly is another object. All these objects bring with them a disagreeable feeling; but in all of them the object which brings the disagreeable feeling, or is accompanied by the disagreeable feeling, is quite distinguishable from the feeling of disagreeableness itself.

Now when it is said that what we desire is always pleasure, what seems to be meant is that what we desire is always some object the attainment of which is accompanied by an agreeable feeling. Now this is so true that it is almost a tautology. It is clear that if we desire anything, the attainment of it will bring at least a temporary satisfaction; and this satisfaction will be accompanied by a feeling of satisfaction—*i. e.* pleasure. Consequently, anything that we desire may be said to be a pleasure—*i. e.* something that will bring pleasure when attained. The man who desires the overthrow of a political party, for instance, will be pleased if that event happens. We may consequently say that the overthrow of the party was a pleasure. It is in this sense that we use the phrase "an unexpected pleasure," and the like. But evidently the overthrow of a political party is not itself an agreeable feeling; it only brings an agreeable feeling with it. The fact that we desire *pleasures* is no evidence that we desire *pleasure.*

A passage from Mill may help to make this clear. "What, for example," he asks,[1] "shall we say of the love of money? There is nothing originally more desirable about money than about any heap of glittering pebbles. Its worth is solely that of the things which it will buy; the desires for other things than itself, which it is a means of gratifying. Yet the love of money is not only one of the strongest moving forces of human life, but money is, in many cases, desired in and for itself; the desire to possess it is often stronger than the desire to use it, and goes on increasing when all the desires which point to ends beyond it, to be compassed by it, are falling off. It may be then said truly, that money is desired not for the sake of an end, but as part of the end. From being a means to happiness, it has come to be itself a principal ingredient of the individual's conception of happiness. The same may be said of the majority of the great objects of human life—power, for example, or fame. . . . The strongest attraction, both of power and of fame, is the immense aid they give to the attainment of our other wishes; and it is the strong association thus generated between them and all our objects of desire, which gives to the direct desire of them the intensity it often assumes, so as in some characters to surpass in strength all other desires. In these cases the means have become a part of the end, and a more important part of it than any of the things which they are means to. What was once desired as an instrument for the attainment of happiness, has come to be desired for its own sake. In being desired for its own sake it is, however, desired as *part* of happiness. . . . The desire of it is not a different thing from the desire of happiness, any more than the love of music, or the desire of health. They are included in happiness. They are some of the elements of

[1] *Utilitarianism*, chap. iv.

which the desire of happiness is made up. Happiness is not an abstract idea, but a concrete whole; and these are some of its parts." The meaning of all this seems quite clear. Evidently money, power, fame, music, and health are not parts of agreeable feeling. What Mill means is that they are parts of that totality of objects which *gives* agreeable feeling. That we desire such objects, then, may show that we seek *pleasures*, but not that we seek *pleasure*. And that we seek pleasures is a mere tautology. It means simply that we seek what we seek.

§ 6. ETHICAL HEDONISM.—It appears, then, that the theory of psychological Hedonism is unsound. Ethical Hedonism, however, does not stand or fall with this. On the contrary, as Dr. Sidgwick has pointed out,[1] ethical Hedonism is scarcely compatible with psychological Hedonism, at least in its most extreme form. If we always *did* seek our own *greatest pleasure*, there would be no point in saying that we *ought* to seek it; while, on the other hand, it would be absurd to say that we *ought* to seek the pleasure of others, except in so far as this could be shown to coincide with our own. Of course, if psychological Hedonism be merely interpreted as meaning that we always do seek *pleasure of some sort*, then ethical Hedonism may be understood as teaching that we ought to seek the *greatest* pleasure, whether our own or that of others. But, in any case, there is no necessary connection between the two doctrines.[2] The confusion that has often been made

[1] *Methods of Ethics*, Book I., chap iv., § 1.

[2] It will be seen, therefore, that I do not agree with Mr. Muirhead (*Elements of Ethics*, p. 106) in regarding the psychological form of Hedonism as "also its logical form." At the same time, it should be observed that systems of ethical Hedonism (especially when egoistic) have nearly always been made to rest on psychological Hedonism. Nor is this necessarily inconsistent; for most Hedonists (especially

between the two theories seems to be due in part to an ambiguity in the word "desirable."[1] This point also may be illustrated by a passage from Mill. "The only proof," he says, "capable of being given that an object is visible, is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible, is that people hear it. . . . In like manner, I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable, is that people do actually desire it." It is here assumed that the meaning of the word "desirable" is analogous to that of "visible" and "audible." But "visible" means "able to be seen," and "audible" means "able to be heard"; whereas "desirable" does not usually mean "able to be desired." When we say that anything is desirable, we do not usually mean merely that it is able to be desired. There is scarcely anything that is not able to be desired. What we mean is rather that it is *reasonably to be desired*, or that it *ought* to be desired. When the Hedonist says that pleasure is the only thing that is desirable, he means that it is the only thing that *ought* to be desired.

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egoistic Hedonists) have denied any absolute "ought" as having authority over men's natural inclinations. They have regarded Ethics as simply laying down rules for the guidance of our actions, so as to secure the greatest possible gratification of our natural impulses. They have thought that by the introduction of adequate "sanctions" (see below, Note to chap. xiv.) the greatest pleasure of the community as a whole might be made coincident with the individual's greatest pleasure. Bentham was particularly explicit on this point, saying even, paradoxically, that the word "ought" "ought to be abolished." (But *cf. Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. i., § 10.) But this view is, of course, incompatible with the admission (now generally made by all Hedonists) that the gratification of our own inclinations may conflict with duty. If this is allowed, ethical Hedonism cannot rest on psychological. *Cf.* Giżycki's *Introduction to the Study of Ethics*, pp. 70—78.

[1] *Cf.* Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., chap. xiii., § 5.

But the form of the word "desirable" seems to have misled several writers into the notion that they ought to show also that pleasure is the only thing that is *capable* of being desired.[1] The latter view is that of psychological Hedonism, which seems clearly to be unsound. The former is that of ethical Hedonism, which we have still to examine.

We have already stated that there are two forms of ethical Hedonism—*egoistic* and *universalistic.* But before we proceed to consider these, it will be well to indicate more precisely what the general meaning of ethical Hedonism is.

§ 7. QUANTITY OF PLEASURE.—Hedonism is not merely the vague theory that we ought to seek pleasure. It states definitely that we ought to seek the *greatest* pleasure. Otherwise of course it would give us no criterion of right and wrong in conduct. Pleasure may be found by acting in the most contradictory ways. But when we are told to seek the *greatest* pleasure, there can usually be but one course to follow. In estimating the quantity of pleasure, it is usually said that there are two points to be taken into account—*intensity* and *duration.*[2] Some pleasures are

[1] The fallacy here involved is that known to writers on Logic as the "Fallacy of Figure of Speech" (*figuræ dictionis*). See Whately's *Logic*, pp. 117-18, Davis's *Theory of Thought*, p. 270. (I may take this opportunity of commending the treatment of Fallacies in the latter work to the attention of students of Logic.) Jevons (*Elementary Lessons on Logic*, p. 175) seems to have quite misunderstood this fallacy, as well as many others.

[2] In estimating the value of pleasures, there are, according to Bentham, some other qualities also which should be taken into account —*viz.* certainty, propinquity, fecundity (power of producing other pleasures), and purity (freedom from pain). He considered also that we should take account of their extent—*i. e.* the number of persons who participate in them. See his *Principles of Morals and Legislation.* He summed up his view in the following doggerel verses—

preferable to others because they last longer. Pains require also to be taken into account. Pain is simply the opposite of pleasure, and is consequently to be treated just as negative quantities are treated in mathematics. If a pleasure is represented by $+a$, the corresponding pain will be represented by $-a$; and what we are to aim at is to secure the greatest sum of pleasures or the smallest sum of pains, pleasures being counted as positive and pains as negative. If there are three pleasures, valued respectively at 3, 4, and 5; 5 is to be preferred to either 3 or 4, $3+4$ is to be preferred to 5, $3+5$ to $3+4$, and $4+5$ to $3+5$. Again, if we have pains valued at -3, -4, -5; -3 is to be preferred to -4, and -4 to -5. So too $5-3$ is to be preferred to $4-3$, and $3-4$ to $3-5$; while between $4-3$ and $5-4$, or between $3-3$ and $4-4$, there is no ground of preference. And so on.

§ 8. EGOISTIC HEDONISM.—Egoistic Hedonism is the doctrine that what each ought to seek is his own greatest pleasure. Almost the only writers who have held this doctrine in a pure form are the Cyrenaics and Epicureans. The writers of the former school, however, confined themselves to inculcating the pursuit of the pleasure of each moment as it passes—*i. e.* they did not take account of duration. The Epicureans inculcated rather the endeavour to secure the happiness of life as a whole. In modern times, owing to the spirit of self-sacrifice introduced by

[1] "*Intense, long, certain, speedy, fruitful, pure,*
Such marks in *pleasures* and in *pains* endure.
Such pleasures seek, if *private* be thy end;
If it be *public*, wide let them *extend.*
Such *pains* avoid, whichever be thy view;
If pains *must* come, let them *extend* to few."

Cf. Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 240-1, and Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 36-7.

Christianity, this doctrine has seldom been avowed in any form. Hobbes[1] and Gassendi are the chief modern writers who decidedly adopt this view; and it is by them made to rest on psychological Hedonism. It appears also in a manner in Spinoza;[2] but he subordinates it to a certain metaphysical theory, which we cannot here consider.

Egoistic Hedonism has always presented a repulsive appearance to the moral consciousness. Yet it is possible to give it a plausible appearance, and even at the present time it is recognized by Dr. Sidgwick as an inevitable element in a complete system of Ethics. The reason why this should seem to be so is evident enough. It is clear that the end at which we are to aim must be some end that will give us satisfaction. When asked why we pursue any end, the only reasonable answer that can be given, is that it satisfies some demand of our nature; and the only finally satisfactory answer that can be given, is that it satisfies the most fundamental demand of our nature. For if we say that we pursue the end for some external reason—as, *e.g.*, because we are commanded by some superior authority—

[1] For an account of Hobbes, see Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 163—170. It should be observed, however (what perhaps Dr. Sidgwick does not sufficiently bring out), that the Egoism of Hobbes is much more pronounced than his Hedonism. It is even open to question whether he is strictly to be regarded as a Hedonist at all, though on the whole the answer seems to be in the affirmative. *Cf.* Croom Robertson's *Hobbes*, p. 136. Helvetius and Mandeville may perhaps be classed as Egoistic Hedonists. See Lecky's *History of European Morals*, p. 6 *sqq.* But Mandeville can hardly be taken seriously. It should be added that scarcely any of these writers can be regarded as *purely* (or at least consistently) egoistic. Even Hobbes is led in the end to recognize a law of Reason (though of a very derivative character) bidding us have regard to the general good. See Croom Robertson's *Hobbes*, p. 142.

[2] See Principal Caird's *Spinoza*, chaps. xii. and xiii. Spinoza's highest end was rather *blessedness* than *pleasure*. See below, p. 110.

there still remains the question why we are to be influenced by that external reason. The only answer that leaves no further question behind it, is the answer that has reference to an ultimate demand of our nature. Now, when we are asked what it is that satisfies the ultimate demands of our nature, it is very natural to answer "Pleasure."

On consideration, however, it appears that, in giving this answer, we are misled by the same ambiguity as that which we encountered in dealing with psychological Hedonism. It is undoubtedly true that whatever satisfies the ultimate demands of our nature will bring pleasure with it, and may consequently be described as a pleasure. But this pleasure must have some objective content, and that content is not itself pleasure. The object that gives us pleasure may be the pleasure of some one else, or it may be the welfare of our country, or it may be the fulfilment of what we conceive to be our duty. These things are *pleasures*—*i. e.* they are objects the attainment of which will bring us pleasure. But they are not themselves *pleasure*—*i. e.* agreeable feeling. Here, again, therefore, to say that we ought to seek *pleasures*, is not to say that we ought to seek *pleasure.*

Dr. Sidgwick, however, thinks[1] that "when we sit down in a cool hour" (as he says, quoting Butler), we perceive that there is nothing which it is reasonable to seek—*i. e.* nothing which is desirable in itself—except pleasure. He then argues that since pleasure is the one desirable thing, the greatest pleasure must be the most desirable. A more intense pleasure is consequently to be preferred to a less intense, and a pleasure which lasts longer to one that is of shorter duration. Further, he urges that, in estimating our pleasures, a past or future pleasure ought, *cæteris paribus*, to be regarded as of equal value with a present one. For

[1] *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., chap. xiv., § 5.

mere difference of time[1] can of itself make no difference to the value of our pleasures.[2] All this is evidently true, on the assumption that pleasure is the one desirable thing. But there seems to be no warrant for this assumption.[3]

§ 9. UNIVERSALISTIC HEDONISM.—Universalistic Hedonism or Utilitarianism is the theory that what we ought to aim at is the greatest possible amount of pleasure of all human beings, or of all sentient creatures. The chief exponents of this theory are Bentham, J. S. Mill, and Professor Sidgwick. Bentham's proof of the theory is not very explicit,[4] and may perhaps be considered to be sufficiently represented by that of Mill. Mill's argument is stated thus in the fourth chapter of his *Utilitarianism:* "No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. This, however, being a fact, we have not only all the proof which the case admits of, but all which it is possible to require, that happiness is a good: that each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons." He then goes on to argue that happiness is the only good, on the ground that we have already noticed—*viz.* that to desire a thing and to find it pleasant are but two ways of expressing the same thing. Now it would be difficult to collect in a short space so many fallacies as are here committed. We have already noticed the confusion in the last point, due to the ambiguity in the word "pleasure." We have also noticed the con-

[1] Apart from the *uncertainty* which is generally connected with the lapse of time. Allowance would, of course, have to be made for this.

[2] *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., chap. xiii., § 3.

[3] *Cf.* § 5, and see below, § 10.

[4] *Cf.* Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 241-245.

fusion with regard to the meaning of "desirable," which vitiates the first part of the argument. It only remains to notice the fallacy involved in the inference that "the general happiness is a good to the aggregate of all persons." The fallacy is that which is known in logic as "the fallacy of composition." It is inferred that because my pleasures are a good to me, yours to you, his to him, and so on, therefore my pleasures + your pleasures + his pleasures are a good to me + you + him. It is forgotten that neither the pleasures nor the persons are capable of being made into an aggregate. It is as if we should argue that because each one of a hundred soldiers is six feet high, therefore the whole company is six hundred feet high. The answer is that this would be the case if the soldiers stood on one another's heads. And similarly Mill's argument would hold good if the minds of all human beings were to be rolled into one, so as to form an aggregate. But as it is, "the aggregate of all persons" is nobody, and consequently nothing can be a good to him. A good must be a good for somebody.[1]

Dr. Sidgwick's proof is of a more satisfactory character. He considers universalistic Hedonism to be established in the very same way as Egoistic Hedonism is established.[2] He thinks that he has shown that pleasure is the only thing that is in itself desirable. This being the case, pleasure is always to be chosen. And in the choice of pleasure, reason bids us be impartial. The greatest attainable pleasure is always to be selected. In choosing our own pleasures, the future is to be regarded as of equal weight with the present. In like manner, also, the pleasures of others are to be regarded as of equal weight with our own.

[1] *Cf.* Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, p. 103.

[2] *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., chap. xiii., § 3.

It might be thought that in this way Dr. Sidgwick had overthrown egoistic Hedonism, and shown universalistic Hedonism to be the only reasonable Hedonistic system. But, for some reason which it is not easy to discover, he does not consider this to be the case. So far as can be made out, the reason seems to be that what is primarily our good is our own pleasure; and it is only in a secondary way that we discover that the pleasure of others ought to be equally regarded. Now this secondary discovery cannot overthrow the first primary truth. Hence we are bound still to regard our own pleasure as a supreme good. For this reason Dr. Sidgwick considers that there is a certain contradiction or dualism in the final recommendations of reason. We are bound to seek our own greatest pleasure, and yet we are bound also to seek the greatest pleasure of the aggregate of sentient beings. Now these two ends may not, and probably will not, coincide. There is thus a conflict between two different commands of reason. This conflict is referred to by Dr. Sidgwick as "the Dualism of Practical Reason."[1] But if there is any force in this consideration, it seems as if we might carry it further, and say that there is a similar conflict between the pursuit of our own greatest pleasure at a given moment and the pursuit of the greatest happiness of life as a whole. For it is the pleasure of a given moment that appears to be primarily desirable. At any given moment what seems desirable is the satisfaction of our present wants. Consequently, on the same principle we might say that we are bound to seek

[1] For Dr. Sidgwick's view on this point, see his *Methods of Ethics*, concluding chapter. Prof. Giżycki, who is to a large extent a follower of Dr. Sidgwick, does not accept his doctrine on this point. See his criticism of the fourth edition of the *Methods of Ethics* in the *International Journal of Ethics* for October, 1890.

the greatest pleasure of a given moment no less than the greatest pleasure of our whole life. There would thus be three kinds of Hedonism instead of two—the Cyrenaic view being recognized as well as the Epicurean and the Benthamite. However, it is perhaps scarcely worth while to consider which form of Hedonism is the most reasonable, as they seem all to be based on a misconception.

Two points may be noted with regard to universalistic Hedonism. In the first place, it used to be described as Utilitarianism, because it was supposed to inculcate the pursuit of what is useful. But it is now seen that pleasure is not more useful than any other possible end; and the name has consequently been dropped in scientific writings—though, for shortness, the term is still often used as a designation of the school. In the second place, the end of universalistic Hedonism used to be described as being the attainment of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." The meaning of this was,[1] that if we had to choose between a great happiness of a small number and a smaller happiness of a great number, we ought to prefer the latter, even if the total happiness were less. But it is now recognized that if pleasure is to be regarded as the good, we are bound to choose the greatest pleasure, even if it should be concentrated in a single person, instead of being distributed over a large number. Accordingly, this phrase has also been abandoned.[2]

[1] In so far as it had any definite meaning. The phrase seems to have been frequently employed without any definite meaning being attached to it. There is an interesting discussion of this point in Edgeworth's *Mathematical Psychics*, p. 117 *sqq.*

[2] It should be observed that Bentham himself seems, in his later years, to have discarded the expression "of the greatest number." His reasons for doing so (which are not very clearly explained) may be found in Burton's *Introduction to Bentham's Works*, pp. 18 and 19, *note*.

§ **10.** General Criticism of Hedonism. (*a*) *Pleasure and Value.*—We see now the general foundation on which the Hedonistic theory of Ethics rests. It may be based either on a psychological theory of the object of desire or on a theory of value. The former basis has been perhaps sufficiently discussed; but on the latter some remarks must still be added.

The general point of view is that, though our desires may often be directed to other objects than pleasure, yet, when we set ourselves calmly to consider the matter, we see that pleasure is that which alone constitutes the value for us of the objects of our experience. A psychosis (to use Prof. Huxley's term,[1] adopted by recent psychologists), *i. e.* a state of consciousness, is valuable for us exactly in proportion as it is pleasant. Consequently, though the impulse of desire may sometimes move towards the less pleasant of two possible objects; and though, therefore, we cannot say that our desires are always moved simply by the calculation of pleasure; yet, when we reflect calmly, and from a purely egoistic point of view, we see that the only reasonable ground of preference between two psychoses is that the one is more pleasurable than the other. Hence, though it is not true that we always act in such a way as to secure for ourselves the pleasantest of possible psychoses, yet we ought (*i. e.* it is reasonable) to secure for ourselves the most pleasant, so long as this does not interfere with the pleasure of any one else; and, in general, we ought to act in such a way as to make the sum of the pleasures of all psychoses, present and future, as great as possible.

Now it is true, I think, that pleasure may fairly be described as a *sense of value.*[2] Mr. Bradley has said[3] that

[1] Huxley's *Hume*, p. 62. [2] *Cf.* Dewey's *Psychology*, p. 16.
[3] *Ethical Studies*, p. 234.

pleasure is essentially "the feeling of self-realizedness." Exception might be taken to this, on the ground that it can scarcely be applied to the feelings of animals, or to the more animal pleasures of men. But at any rate we may say that the feeling of pleasure is the accompaniment of objects which have a certain value for the consciousness to which they are presented. It is of some importance, I think, to remember that it is the objects, not the feelings of pleasure, that have value—the feeling of pleasure being the *sense* of value, not the *value* itself; but with this point we need not here trouble ourselves. It is sufficient to note that, from this point of view, it seems at least plausible to say that, though pleasure is not the direct object of desire, and though it is not even in itself that which has value for us, yet it may be accepted as the *measure of value;* just as the degrees of a thermometer, though not themselves heat, may be taken as the measure of heat; or as a token currency, though of little value in itself, may serve to measure the values of commodities.

This, I say, is a plausible view. But it evidently rests on the assumption that pleasures are all of the same sort; just as the power of money to serve as a measure of the values of goods rests on the assumption of a certain uniformity in the currency. If the sense of value which we have in pleasant feeling is to be taken as the measure of the values which we reasonably attach to the different objects that are presented to our consciousness, this implies that the values are always judged by the same standard, always presented, so to speak, before the same court of appeal. Or (taking Mr. Bradley's phrase) if pleasure is the feeling of self-realizedness, then, in taking pleasure as the measure of our self-realization, we assume that it is *always the same self that is realized.* But is this the case? Before

considering this point any further, it may be well to notice the form in which it was presented by Mill.

(*b*) *Quality of Pleasures.*—We may say briefly that the Hedonistic theory proceeds on the assumption that all pleasures are capable of being quantitatively compared—that it is always possible to determine with regard to two pleasures, or two sums of pleasures, which is the greater and which is the less. On this point a serious difficulty was raised [1] by J. S. Mill, who called attention to the fact that pleasures differ not merely in quantity but also in quality—that some pleasures are preferable to others, not because as pleasures they are greater, but because they are of a more excellent kind. If this is the case, it is evident that the Hedonistic theory must be abandoned, for it is then no longer true that pleasure is the only desirable thing. One pleasure is, on this view, more desirable than another, not on account of its nature as pleasure, but on account of some other quality that it possesses, beyond its mere pleasantness. Further, if we admit differences of quality, it becomes impossible to place pleasures, and sums of pleasure, in any precise order of desirability. Qualities cannot be estimated against quantities, unless in some way they can be reduced to quantities—and this, on Mill's supposition, is not the case. It becomes important, therefore, to consider whether there really are qualitative differences among pleasures. In order to do this, we must recur to some of the points that were discussed in the last chapter.

(*c*) *Kinds of Pleasure.*—In the last chapter we distinguished between appetites and desires, and we pointed out also that desires may belong to a great variety of distinct

[1] *Utilitarianism*, chap. ii. He did not, indeed, raise the point *as* a difficulty, but rather as indicating a way out of a difficulty. But evidently it is a difficulty from the Hedonistic point of view.

universes. Now just as there is a distinction between different kinds of desire, so there is a distinction between the feelings of satisfaction which accompany the attainment of their objects. When an appetite is satisfied, the feeling of satisfaction is simple and immediate. It is to this kind of feeling that the term *pleasure* is perhaps most properly applied. On the other hand, the feeling which accompanies the satisfaction of desire is of a more intellectual or reflective character, and ought perhaps rather to be described as *happiness*. Human desire involves the more or less direct consciousness of an end, and in the feeling which accompanies its satisfaction there is also a more or less direct consciousness of an end attained. These feelings vary greatly, according to the nature of the universe within which we are living at the time when the desire is satisfied. The feelings of satisfaction that belong to the universe of self-interest are very different from those that belong to the universe of duty; those that belong to the universe of animal enjoyment are very different from those that belong to the universe of poetic or religious emotion. Carlyle has suggested[1] that, in the case of such higher universes as these, the feeling ought to be described rather as *blessedness*[2] than as *happiness*. At any rate, whether or not we use different words for the different universes, it seems clear that the feelings in question are of very different characters. It is, in fact, a very different self that is realized in each of these cases; and the feeling of self-realizedness is consequently different. Or, to put it in the other form that we have used,[3] the sense of value in each case is a sense of value for a different judge. We are estimating, as it were,

[1] *Sartor Resartus*, Book II., chap. ix.

[2] Spinoza also seems to use the term *beatitudo* in this sense. *Cf.* also Janet's *Theory of Morals*, Book I., chap iv.

[3] Above, p. 108.

sometimes in gold, sometimes in silver, and sometimes in copper. Now it might be possible, no doubt, to find a common denominator for these: but this common denominator does not seem to be supplied in the feeling of pleasure itself.

There is, however, a difficulty which is apt to present itself at this point. It is apt to be thought that what is different in these different cases is not the feeling itself, but merely the object on which the feeling depends. This is the point that we have next to consider.

(*d*) *Pleasure inseparable from its Object.*—Pleasure, it must be remembered, is not an entity, having an existence by itself, independently of the object in which pleasure is felt, or of the unity of consciousness to which that object is presented. It is an element in a total state of consciousness, and is entirely relative to the other elements in that state. It is the inner side of that of which the other elements may be said to form the outer side. The sharp distinction that we are apt to draw between an object of consciousness and the feeling of pleasure or pain which accompanies it, is due largely to an inadequate apprehension of the nature of the object which is presented to our consciousness. Take, for instance, the pleasure which accompanies the hearing of a musical performance. The pleasure here is evidently quite distinct from the music which we hear. But it must be remembered that the music which we hear is not the total object that is before our consciousness. The hearing of the music is accompanied by all sorts of ideas which it calls up in our minds. It is accompanied also by other ideas which were passing through our minds before the music commenced. The object which is before our consciousness is a complex total of innumerable thoughts and images. Now the feeling of pleasure is not this complex total; but

neither can it be said to be anything that is separable from that total. It is the inner side to which that total corresponds as the outer side. Given that total, we could not but have that feeling of pleasure. Change that total, and our feeling of pleasure must also be changed. The total content of our consciousness in listening to a piece of music is different from the total content in reading a novel or witnessing a dramatic performance: the feeling of pleasure is also different. The feeling and the object to which it corresponds are like the two sides of a curve. They are distinguishable from one another; yet they are inseparable, and the one necessarily varies with the other.[1]

(*e*) *Pleasures cannot be Summed.*—It follows from this that there cannot be any *calculus* of pleasures—*i. e.* that

[1] Dr. Sidgwick has replied to this objection, as stated by Green. "It is sometimes said," he remarks (*Methods of Ethics*, Book II., chap. ii., § 2, *note*) "that 'pleasure as feeling, in distinction from its conditions which are not feelings, cannot be conceived.' This is true in a certain sense of the word 'conceive'; but not in any sense which would prevent us from taking pleasure as an end of rational action. To adopt an old comparison, it is neither more nor less true than the statement that an angle cannot be 'conceived' apart from its sides. We certainly cannot form the notion of an angle without the notion of sides containing it; but this does not prevent us from apprehending with perfect definiteness the magnitude of any angle as greater or less than that of any other, without any comparison of the pairs of containing sides. Similarly we cannot form a notion of any pleasure existing apart from some 'conditions which are not feelings'; but this is no obstacle to our comparing a pleasure felt under any given conditions with any other, however otherwise conditioned, and pronouncing it equal or unequal: and we require no more than this to enable us to take 'amount of pleasure' as our standard in deciding between alternatives of conduct." But this reply seems to involve a misconception of the precise nature of the criticism. The length of the sides makes no difference to the size of the angle; whereas Green's argument is that the nature of the objects makes all the difference in the world to the kind of pleasure that we feel.

the values of pleasures cannot be quantitatively estimated. For there can be no quantitative estimate of things that are not homogeneous. But, indeed, even apart from this consideration, there seems to be a certain confusion in the Hedonistic idea that we ought to aim at a greatest sum of pleasures. If pleasure is the one thing that is desirable, it is clear that a sum of pleasures cannot be desirable; for a sum of pleasures is not pleasure. We are apt to think that a sum of pleasures is pleasure, just as a sum of numbers is a number. But this is evidently not the case. A sum of pleasures is not pleasure, any more than a sum of men is a man. For pleasures, like men, cannot be added to one another. Consequently, if pleasure is the only thing that is desirable, a sum of pleasures cannot possibly be desirable. If the Hedonistic view were to be adopted, we ought always to desire the greatest pleasure—*i. e.* we ought to aim at producing the most intense feeling of pleasure that it is possible to reach in some one's consciousness.[1] This would be the highest aim. A sum of smaller pleasures, in a number of different people's consciousnesses, could not be preferable to this; because a sum of pleasures is not pleasure at all. The reason why this does not appear to be the case, is that we habitually think of the desirable thing for man not as a feeling of pleasure but as a continuous state of happiness. But a continuous state of happiness is not a mere feeling of pleasure. It has a certain objective content. Now if we regard this content as the desirable thing, we do not regard the feeling of pleasure

[1] Just as, if our object were to produce the greatest man (instead of the greatest pleasure), Falstaff would have to be preferred to the whole of his ragged company. We may calculate, no doubt, that nine tailors make a man; but that is only on the assumption that our object is not man as such, but the fulfilment of certain functions of a man.

as the one thing that is desirable; *i. e.* we abandon Hedonism.

(*f*) *Matter without Form.*—We may sum up the defects of Hedonism by saying that it has the opposite fault to that which we found in the system of Kant. Kant's principle of self-consistency gave us form without matter—the mere form of reason, with all the particular content of the desires left out. Hedonism, on the other hand, gives us matter without form. It takes up all the desires as they stand, and regards the satisfaction of all as having an equal right, in so far as the pleasant feeling accompanying the satisfaction is equally intense and lasts equally long. This view ignores the fact that what we really seek to satisfy is not our *desires* but *ourselves*; and the value of our satisfactions depends on the kind of self to which the satisfaction is given—*i. e.* it depends on the universe within which the satisfaction is received. It may be mere animal pleasure: it may be human happiness: it may be saint-like bliss. To consider it in this way is to consider our desires with reference to their *form*—with reference to the universe in which they have a place. Hedonism ignores this form. It looks on our desires and their gratifications simply as quantities of raw material. It regards our wants as so many mouths to be filled, and the pleasures of their satisfaction as so many lumps of sugar to go into them. It is matter without form.[1]

[1] For further criticism on Hedonism, I may refer to Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, Essay III., Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book III., chap. i., and Book IV., chaps. iii. and iv., Sorley's *Ethics of Naturalism*, Part I., chap. iii., Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*, Book II., Part I., chap. v., § 2, Janet's *Theory of Morals*, Book I., chap. iv., Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 14—67, Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, Book III., chap. i. For a fuller statement of my own view on this subject, I may refer to my *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, pp. 202—227.

§ **11.** Relation of Happiness to the Self.—But though we thus seem bound to reject the Hedonistic theory, we must not overlook the importance of happiness. If happiness is not exactly "our being's end and aim," it is yet certain that we cannot attain the end of our being without attaining happiness. All that we have to insist on is that in seeking happiness we must observe exactly what kind of happiness it is that we seek. Happiness is relative to the nature of the being who enjoys it. The happiness of a man is different from the happiness of a beast: the happiness of a wise man is different from the happiness of a fool. What constitutes our happiness, in fact, depends on the universe in which we live. The smaller our universe, the more easily is our happiness attained.

"That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it."

"It is indisputable," as Mill says,[1] "that the being whose capacities of enjoyment are low, has the greatest chance of having them fully satisfied; and a highly-endowed being will always feel that any happiness which he can look for, as the world is constituted, is imperfect. But he can learn to bear its imperfections, if they are at all bearable; and they will not make him envy the being who is indeed unconscious of the imperfections, but only because he feels not at all the good which those imperfections qualify. It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." What is important, then, is not that we should seek the greatest sum of happiness, but the best kind of happiness. "We can

[1] *Utilitarianism*, chap. ii.

only have the highest happiness," said George Eliot,[1] "—such as goes along with being a great man—by having wide thoughts, and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good." The nature of the highest happiness, then, depends not on its being the greatest sum, but on its belonging to the highest kind of character. That is, it depends on the nature of the self, on the nature of the universe within which we habitually live. To attain the highest happiness, then, we must live habitually in the highest kind of universe, and the desires that belong to that universe must be satisfied.

§ **12.** SELF-REALIZATION AS THE END.—We seem, however, to be very little farther on than we were at the end of last chapter. For at the end of last chapter we propounded the question, how we were to distinguish a higher universe from a lower; and this question is still unanswered. We have only been enabled to see that quantity of pleasure cannot furnish the criterion, and that we must look for the criterion rather in the nature of the character itself. We see, in fact, that the end must consist in some form of self-realization, *i. e.* in some form of the development of character—that the end, in short, ought to be described rather as *perfection* than as *happiness.* What perfection or self-realization consists in, we must endeavour to find out in the following chapter.

[1] Epilogue to *Romola.*

NOTE I. ON PLEASURE AND DESIRE.

Both in this chapter and in the preceding, I have assumed that a satisfied desire brings pleasure, while an unsatisfied desire (or an unsatisfied appetite) is accompanied by pain. It should be observed, however, that this is a point on which there has been a good deal of discussion; and that the view taken in the text is not universally adopted. The chief point on which there is difference of opinion is with reference to what are called "the Pleasures of Pursuit." It is held by some writers, and notably by Professor Sidgwick, that, in consequence of the existence of these pleasures, unsatisfied desires and appetites are frequently in themselves rather pleasurable than painful. It may be well here to add a few words on this point. Professor Sidgwick's view is thus stated in the *Methods of Ethics* (Book I., chap. iv., § 2, p. 48):—

"When a desire is having its natural effect in causing the actions which tend to the attainment of its object, it seems to be commonly either a neutral or a more or less pleasurable consciousness: even when this attainment is still remote. At any rate the consciousness of eager activity, in which this desire is an essential item, is highly pleasurable: and in fact such pleasures, which we may call generally the pleasures of Pursuit, constitute a considerable element in the total enjoyment of life. Indeed it is almost a commonplace to say that they are more important than the pleasures of Attainment: and in many cases it is the prospect of the former rather than of the latter that induces us to engage in a pursuit."[1] I believe that this antithesis between "Pursuit" and "Attainment" involves a fundamental misconception, and it seems to me to be of considerable importance that this misconception should be removed. There is, so far as I can see, no such thing as a pleasure of Pursuit, as opposed to Attainment. The truth appears to me to be rather that there are two kinds of attainment—what might be called *progressive* attainment and *catastrophic* attainment. The "pleasure of Pursuit" is, I think, in reality the pleasure of progressive Attainment. When it was said, for instance, "If I held Truth in my hand, I would let it go again for the *pleasure of pursuing it*," what was really intended seems

[1] For some further illustrations of Dr. Sidgwick's view, the reader may be referred to *Mind*, New Series, vol. i., No. 1 (Jan. 1892), pp. 94—101.

to have been *the pleasure of progressively attaining it.* And I think this is the case also with those pleasures that are referred to by Professor Sidgwick as "pleasures of Pursuit." He takes the case, for instance, of a game of skill. "No ordinary player, before entering on such a contest, has any desire for victory in it: indeed he often finds it difficult to imagine himself deriving gratification from such victory, before he has actually engaged in the competition. What he deliberately, before the game begins, desires is not victory, but the pleasant excitement of the struggle for it; only for the full development of this pleasure a transient desire to win the game is generally indispensable. This desire, which does not exist at first, is stimulated to considerable intensity by the competition itself: and in proportion as it is thus stimulated both the mere contest becomes more pleasurable, and the victory, which was originally indifferent, comes to afford a keen enjoyment." With the whole of this passage I agree, with the single exception of the statement that the contest becomes more pleasurable *in proportion as* the desire to win the game is stimulated. On the contrary, it seems to me that we may distinguish between two kinds of desire to win the game—*viz.* the desire to win it simply as a catastrophic result, and the desire to win it as the culminating point in a continuous process. In proportion as the former kind of desire is stimulated, it appears to me that the game ceases to be pleasurable. It is, I believe, a common experience that the gambler whose aim is fixed exclusively on the result of the game ceases to get any real pleasure from it. The man who really enjoys the game is he who desires victory, but desires it only as the culminating point in a progressive series. And the same applies in other cases. The mountaineer who *merely* wishes to reach the topmost peak, is simply annoyed by the process of climbing up: he would prefer to reach it by a balloon or by a hydraulic hoist. The man who enjoys the ascent is the one who desires the end only in so far as it gives unity and completeness to the process of attaining it. So also the man who is *merely* interested in the conclusion of a story does not enjoy the novel in which it is told: his view is rather like that of Christopher Sly—"'Tis a very excellent piece of work—would 'twere done!" The man who really enjoys the story cares for the end only in relation to the process that leads up to it. Now the man who desires an end in relation to the process of reaching it, is not, I think, correctly described as receiving pleasure from a *pursuit*, as distinguished from an *attainment*. The pursuit is, for him, a progressive attainment. From the nature of the case, he could not attain otherwise than by pursuit. A story, for instance, does not admit of any kind of attainment but that of going

through it from beginning to end. In such a process the desire receives a continuous satisfaction, and is not properly regarded as waiting for its satisfaction till the end is reached.

I conceive that this view may be applied even to such a case as that of hunger. It seems to me, indeed, to be somewhat incorrect to speak of the mere *appetite* of hunger as desire. *Hunger* ought, I think, to be sharply distinguished from the *desire for food.* It seems to me to be mainly owing to the failure to draw this distinction that hunger is represented by Professor Sidgwick as forming an exception[1] to the general rule about the "Paradox of Hedonism."[2] It forms an exception, so far as I can see, only because it is not a desire at all. This, however, is a side issue, on which I do not wish to insist at present. The craving of hunger, though not properly a desire, seems to resemble certain of our desires in being susceptible of a progressive satisfaction; and it is for this reason, as I conceive, that the craving appears often to be pleasurable. It is pleasurable because it is continuously attaining its object. As far as I can judge, indeed, the satisfaction of hunger begins, under normal conditions, even prior to the taking of food at all. The "watering of the mouth" is, I think, a commencement of satisfaction; and in the case of predatory animals I suspect that there is a certain satisfaction even in the act of pursuit.[3] At any rate, the normal act of satisfying hunger does not appear to be of a catastrophic character. *Ducere cœnam* is a principle of general applicability. The satisfaction of the craving is a progressive one. Now if this is the case, it seems clear that the mere fact that hunger is, under normal conditions, rather pleasurable than otherwise (which I believe to be true), cannot be accepted as a proof that the mere craving in itself is pleasurable, or is not painful, in so far as it remains unsatisfied. For under normal conditions it is not unsatisfied, but is progressively attaining its end.[4]

There is another point, closely connected with this one, which appears to me to be overlooked by Professor Sidgwick in his discussion on the above subject—*viz.* that our desires and appetites are capable, to a considerable extent, of an imaginative satisfaction. Dickens's

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[1] See *Methods of Ethics*, Book I., chap. iv., § 2, p. 49: "This effect" [*viz.* that we lose pleasure by seeking it] "is not visible, or at any rate is scarcely visible, in the case of passive sensual pleasures."

[2] See above, § 3.

[3] It is only in *this* sense, I think, that there is any real "pleasure of pursuit."

[4] See also Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, pp. 156—158.

"Marchioness" did not by any means stand alone in the power of "making believe very much." If it is true that

> "Cowards die many times before their deaths;
> The valiant never taste of death but once,"

it may also be said that the imaginative satisfy their desires many times before they are satisfied in fact, while the unimaginative have but a single satisfaction. The imaginative player, even if he loses, loses but once for a score of times that he has won—in fancy; and these imaginary successes may be quite as satisfying to his mind at the moment as an equal number of real ones would have been. The "pleasures of Pursuit" are to a large extent made up of these mental victories; and this fact must largely qualify our view of them as cases of unsatisfied desire, even apart from the consideration (which may not be always applicable) that the desire is in reality attaining its end by means of a continuous process.

I make these remarks merely with the view of bringing out the point of view which seems to me correct, and which I have adopted in the present handbook. They are not by any means offered with the view of giving a complete solution to the difficult question involved.[1]

Note II. On Matter and Form.

The Hedonistic point of view, which accepts the simple matter of the desires or passions, without any attempt to reduce them to form by reason, was well summed up by Hume (*Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II., Part III., Sect. III.), in his famous declaration that "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions"—*i. e.* that it can only point the way to their gratification, not essentially modify or form them. *Cf.* his *Dissertation on the Passions*, Sect. V. This is substantially the point of view which all Hedonists adopt. But it involves a dualism between reason and passion similar to that recognized by Kant, except that it lays emphasis on the opposite side.

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[1] Students interested in the subject of pleasures of Pursuit will find further discussion and admirable illustrations in Tucker's *Light of Nature*, chap. vi.

CHAPTER VII.

PERFECTION.

"Man musste es zuletzt am gerathesten finden aus dem ganzen Complex der gesunden menschlichen Natur das Sittliche so wie das Schöne zu entwickeln."[1]—GOETHE.

§ 1. APPLICATION OF EVOLUTION TO MORALS.—The idea that the end at which we are to aim is the realization of the self or the development of character, leads us at once to regard the moral life as a process of growth. Although this idea has often been applied to the moral life in former ages, yet it is chiefly in recent times that the conception has been made prominent. The whole idea of growth or development—the idea of "evolution," as it is often called—may almost be said to be a discovery of the present century. It was first brought into prominence by Hegel and Comte; it was applied by Lamarck, Darwin, and others, to the origin of species; while Mr. Spencer and others have extended its applications to the origin of social institutions, forms of government, and the like, and even to the formation of the solar and stellar systems. With these applications we are not here concerned. We have to deal only with the application of the idea of evolution to morals. And even with this application we have to deal only in a certain aspect. We are not concerned at present with the fact that the moral

[1] ("It was at last found most advisable to deduce the development of Morals as well as of Æsthetics out of the whole Complex of healthy human nature.")

life of individuals and nations undergoes a gradual growth or development in the course of years or ages. This is a fact of moral history, whereas here we are concerned only with the theory of that which is essential to the very nature of morality. When we say, then, that the idea of evolution is applicable to the moral life, we mean that the moral life is, in its very essence, a growth or development. The sense in which it is so will, it is hoped, become apparent as we proceed.

§ 2. DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE.—We may say, to begin with, that what we mean is this. There is in the moral life of man a certain end or ideal, to which he may attain, or of which he may fall short; and the significance of his life consists in the pursuit of this end or ideal, and the gradual attainment of it. We may illustrate what we mean by reference to the forms of animal life. Among animals there are some that we naturally regard as standing higher in the scale of being than others. We judge them to be higher by reference to a certain (it may be a somewhat vague) standard that we have in our minds—whether it be, as with Mr. Herbert Spencer, the standard of adaptation to their environment, or the standard of approximation to the human type, or whatever else it may be. Now if we are right in supposing that there is a continuous development going on throughout the species of animal existence, the main significance of this development will lie in the evolution of forms of life that approach more and more nearly to the standard or ideal type. Similarly, the evolutionary theory of Ethics is the view that there is a standard or ideal of character, and that the significance of the moral life consists in the gradual approximation to that type.

§ 3. HIGHER AND LOWER VIEWS OF DEVELOPMENT.—In all development there is a beginning, a process, and an end.

The developing thing starts from a certain level and moves onwards towards a higher level. Now in general what is presented to us is neither the beginning nor the end, but the process. The lowest forms of animal life do not often come before our notice, and the nature of the lowest of all is quite obscure. Nor do we know what possibilities there may be of still further development in the forms of animal life. The starting-point and the goal are alike concealed from us: we see only the race. So it is also with the moral life. The earliest beginnings of the moral consciousness are hidden in obscurity; and, on the other hand, we can scarcely form a clear conception of a perfectly developed moral life. We know it only in the course of its development. Nevertheless, we cannot understand the process except by reference either to its beginning or to its end. And we may endeavour to understand it by reference either to the one or to the other. Hence there are two possible methods of interpreting the moral life, if we adopt the theory of development. We may explain it by reference to its beginning or to its end. The former is perhaps the more natural method; as it is most usual to explain phenomena by their causes and mode of origination. But further consideration seems to show that this is in reality the lower and less satisfactory method. Let us consider briefly the nature and merits of the two methods.

§ 4. EXPLANATION BY BEGINNING.—It seems most natural at first to endeavour to explain the moral life by tracing it back to its origin in the needs of savages, or even in the struggles of the lower animals. It is in this way that we explain ordinary natural phenomena, such as the formation of geological strata, and even the growth and decline of nations. We go back to the beginning, or as near to the beginning as we can get, and trace the causes that have

been in operation throughout the development of the object of our study. We do not inquire what the end of it will be. To inquire into this would, in general, throw little, if any, light upon its actual condition. Ought not the development of morals to be studied in the same way? The answer seems clear. The science of Ethics, as we have already pointed out, occupies quite a different point of view from that of the natural sciences. It is not concerned with the investigation of origins and with the tracing of history, but with the determination of ideals and the consideration of the way in which these ideals influence conduct. Now the ideal lies at the end rather than at the beginning. In dealing with natural phenomena we are concerned primarily with what *is*, and secondarily with the way in which it has come to be what it is. In Ethics, on the other hand, it is of comparatively little interest to know what is.[1] "Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be." It is what he hopes to be that determines the direction of his growth. The meaning of this, however, may become clearer if we direct attention for a little to the theory of one of the most eminent of those recent writers who have endeavoured to deal with the moral life by tracing it back to its origin.

§ 5. MR. HERBERT SPENCER'S VIEW OF ETHICS.—Mr. Herbert Spencer's theory on this subject is contained in a very interesting book entitled *The Data of Ethics*.[2] To give any complete account of the contents of that book would be quite impossible here; but the following may be taken

[1] *I. e.* what *is* in the purely natural history sense, in which we say that the lion *is*, while the unicorn *is not*. In the deeper sense, of course, Ethics *is* concerned with what is—*viz.* with what man's fundamental nature *is*. *Cf.* below, Appendix B, Note II.

[2] Now Part I. of his larger book, *The Principles of Ethics.*

as indicating its drift.[1] Mr. Spencer begins by trying to determine what we mean by conduct, and what we mean by calling conduct good or bad. He examines this question by going back to the life of the lower animals. In all life there is what may be called conduct, and in all life it may be good or bad. Now the essence of life, as seen in its lowest forms, consists, according to Mr. Spencer, in "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations"—*i. e.* the constant effort of an organism to adapt itself to its environment. All conduct tends either to promote or to hinder such adaptation. In so far as it tends to promote it, it is good: in so far as it tends to hinder it, it is bad. Good conduct produces pleasure, because it brings the organism into harmony with its surroundings. Bad conduct produces pain. Nearly all conduct is partly good and partly bad. Perfectly good conduct would be that which produces only pleasure with no accompanying pain. But conduct is relatively good when it tends on the whole to produce a surplus of pleasure over pain—*i. e.* when it tends on the whole to produce a more perfect adjustment of organism to environment. The supreme moral end is to help on the process of development, which consists in a more and more perfect adjustment of internal relations to external relations.

§ **6.** CRITICISM OF MR. SPENCER'S VIEW.—Now this theory is in many ways suggestive. It helps to bring the study of the moral life into co-ordination with the study of life generally; and this is in harmony with the whole development of modern scientific thought, which leads us to believe that there are no absolute divisions between the various objects of our knowledge, and that we are never likely to fully understand any one of these objects without bringing

[1] *Cf.* Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 254—257.

it into relation to all the rest. Yet a little reflection seems to show that Mr. Spencer's theory involves a kind of ὕστερον πρότερον, or putting the cart before the horse. For what is meant by saying that the development of our lives means a continuous process of adjustment to our environment? It is easy to see that in a certain sense such a process is continually going on. The progress of our knowledge means that we are constantly adjusting our ideas more and more to the objective realities of nature. In like manner, the advance of the arts means that we are gradually learning to adjust our modes of life to the necessities imposed upon us by the conditions of the external world. And so in morals, in so far as we can claim to have "sweeter manners, purer laws" than our forefathers, in so far as we have wider ideas of what is required of us, and are more conscientious in meeting these requirements, all this means that we are adjusting our modes of life more and more to the necessities of the case. But what exactly is implied in this adjustment? Does it not imply, above everything, that we have certain ends that we set before ourselves to be attained? When we say that two things are not adjusted to one another, we imply that we have some idea of a relation in which the two things ought to stand and in which at present they do not stand. In a sense everything is adjusted to everything else. Death is an adjustment. A living being is conscious of a certain want of adjustment only because it has certain definite aims. The scientific man perceives that his ideas are not fully adjusted to the facts of nature, and he pursues knowledge in order that he may adjust them more completely; but a stone is adjusted to its environment without the need of any such effort.[1] The scientific man is aware of a want of adjustment simply because he is aware of an

[1] *Cf.* Mr. Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*, pp. 271-2.

unattained end—in other words, because he brings an ideal with him to which the world does not conform. But if this be so, then surely we ought to turn the statement the other way about. We ought not to say that the deficiency of living beings, which the development of their lives is gradually removing, consists in the fact that they are not adjusted to their environment; but rather, at least in the case of self-conscious beings, that the deficiency consists in the fact that their environment is not adjusted to them. For it is not in the environment, but in themselves, that the standard lies, with reference to which a deficiency is pronounced. If a man were content to "let the world slide," he would soon enough become adjusted to his environment; it is because he insists on pursuing his own ends that the process of adjustment is a hard one. It is because he wants to adjust his environment to himself; or rather, because he wants to adjust both himself and his surroundings to a certain ideal of what his life ought to be. Even in the case of the lower animals, indeed, it would often be as true to say that they adjust their environment to themselves as that they adjust themselves to their environment. In any case, adjustment seems to have no meaning unless we presuppose some ideal form of adjustment, some end that is consciously or unconsciously sought. But if so, then it is surely rather with the idea of this end that we ought to start than with the mere idea of the process of adjustment, in which the end is presupposed. Though it seems natural to begin at the beginning in our explanation and move on, through the process, to the end; yet since in this case it is the end by which the process is determined, it is rather at the end that we ought to begin.[1]

[1] For a more complete discussion of Spencer's doctrine, see Sorley's *Ethics of Naturalism*, especially pp. 203—220, Alexander's *Moral*

§ 7. Views of other Evolutionists.—Mr. Spencer's theory is distinguished from that of most other writers of the evolutionist school by the distinctness with which he recognizes an ultimate and absolute end to which conduct is directed. Although he begins his explanation from below, from the beginning, from the simplest forms of life, he yet leads up to the conception of an absolute end. Hence he insists on the need of treating Ethics from a teleological point of view[1]; and indeed carries his conception of an ultimate end so far that he even propounds the idea of an absolute system of Ethics, not relating to the present world at all, but rather to a world in which the adjustment to environment shall have been completely brought about.[2] Most other evolutionists have repudiated this absolute Ethics,[3] and have also avoided the statement of any absolute end to which we are moving. Thus, Mr. Leslie Stephen seems to content himself with the idea of *health* or *efficiency*. "A moral rule is a statement of a condition of social welfare."[4] Virtue means efficiency with a view to the maintenance of social equilibrium.[5] This theory does not require any view of an ultimate end to which society is moving; but simply takes society as it finds it, and regards its preservation and equilibrium as the end to be aimed at.[6] Mr. S. Alexander

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Order and Progress, pp. 266—277, Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 125—145, and Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 67—78, and pp. 142—146.

[1] *Data of Ethics*, pp. 304-5.

[2] See Dr. Sidgwick's account of this, *History of Ethics*, p. 256.

[3] See, for instance, Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, p. 430, Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*, p. 270.

[4] *Science of Ethics*, p. 450.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 79—81, &c.

[6] *Cf.* the statement of Mr. Stephen's theory in Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 257. Of course, on such a view, any actual state of society is regarded as being only partly in equilibrium; and the end aimed at may be said to be a condition of *perfect equilibrium*. But the writers

adopts a view which is substantially the same. Thus he says,[1] "An act or person is measured by a certain standard or criterion of conduct, which has been called the moral ideal. This moral ideal is an adjusted order of conduct, which is based upon contending inclinations and establishes an equilibrium between them. Goodness is nothing but this adjustment in the equilibrated whole." This view of Ethics bears a close relation to the doctrine of the development of animal life which was set forth by Darwin. According to Darwin's view, the development of animal species takes place by means cf a "struggle for existence," in which "the fittest" survive. This process is commonly referred to as one of "natural selection." In the same way, the view of Mr. Stephen and Mr. Alexander is that in the moral life there is a process of natural selection in which the most efficient, or the most perfectly equilibrated type of conduct is preserved. The connection between this theory and that of Darwin has been well worked out by Mr. S. Alexander in a recent article on "Natural Selection in Morals"[2]; and as this seems to me to contain perhaps the best summary statement that we have in English[3] of the attempt to explain morality from below, it may be worth while to indicate briefly its general scope and gist.

§ **8.** Natural Selection in Morals.—"Natural Selec-

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referred to do not attempt to give any positive account of what would be involved in such an equilibrium.

[1] *Moral Order and Progress*, p. 399.

[2] *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. ii, No. 4 (July, 1892), pp. 409—439. *Cf.* also Mr. Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*, Book III., chap. iv., where the same point is brought out.

[3] An even more extreme instance of an attempt to explain morality from below, and on very similar lines, will be found in a recent German work entitled *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft* by Georg Simmel.

tion," says Mr. Alexander,[1] "is a name for the process by which different species with characteristic structures contend for supremacy, and one prevails and becomes relatively permanent." In the case of animal life the struggle is primarily one between different individuals or sets of individuals, some of which die out, while the "more fit" survive. It is not exactly so in morals. "The war of natural selection is carried on in human affairs not against weaker or incompatible individuals, but against their ideals or modes of life. It does not suffer any mode of life to prevail or persist but one which is compatible with social welfare."[2] What happens in the animal world is that certain individuals or sets of individuals happen to be born with peculiar natural gifts. These gifts turn out to be such as make them more fit to survive than other individuals; and accordingly they do survive, and transmit their characteristics to their descendants, while their less favoured rivals die out. In the case of morals, however, we are dealing "not with animals as such, but with minds."[3] In such cases "we have something of the following kind. A person arises (or a few persons) whose feelings, modified by more or less deliberate reflection, incline him to a new course of conduct. He dislikes cruelty or discourtesy, or he objects to seeing women with inferior freedom, or to the unlimited opportunity of intoxication. He may stand alone and with only a few friends to support him. His proposal may excite ridicule or scorn or hatred; and if he is a great reformer, he may endure hardship and obloquy, or even death at the hands of the great body of persons whom he offends. By degrees his ideas spread more and more; people discover that they have similar leanings; they are persuaded by him; their previous antagonism to him is replaced by attachment to

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 431. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 428. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 420.

the new mode of conduct, the new political institution. The new ideas gather every day fresh strength, until at last they occupy the minds of a majority of persons, or even of nearly all."[1] "Persuasion and education, in fact, without destruction, replace here the process of propagation of its own species and destruction of the rival ones, by which in the natural world species become numerically strong and persistent." "Persuasion corresponds to the extermination of the rivals"; for "the victory of mind over mind consists in persuasion."[2] Thus, then, the origin of moral ideals, like the origin of species, is to be explained by a process of natural selection.

§ **9.** Need of Teleology.—Now there can be no doubt that all this is very suggestive and instructive; but if it is to be taken as a complete account of the moral ideal, it labours under a fatal defect. It is a mere natural history of the growth of the moral life. Now in dealing with animal life we may be content with a mere natural history. In this case we do not want to know much more than the nature of the species that exist and that have existed, and the circumstances that have led them to survive or perish. We are not much interested to inquire what right man has to extirpate the wolf, or how we are to justify the extermination of the mammoth or the survival of the ape. We are not specially interested in the *relative values* of different species of animal life. But it is just with the question of value that Ethics is concerned. We wish to know the *ground of preference* of one kind of conduct over another; and it is no solution of this problem to say that the one kind has succeeded in driving out the other. This, indeed, is partly admitted by Mr. Alexander himself. "A new plan of life," he says, "is not made good because it succeeds; its success

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 414. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 420.

is the stamp, the *imprimatur* affixed to it by the course of history, the sign that it is good." [1] But this admission is of little value; for when he is asked what it is, then, that makes it good, what is the common characteristic that makes ideals morally valuable, he can only answer "that that common characteristic consists in that such a plan of life is adapted to the conditions of existence; that under it the society reacts without friction upon its surroundings, or, as I should prefer to say, that in the conditions in which it is placed society can with this ideal so live that no part of it shall encroach upon the rest, that the society can be in equilibrium with itself." [2] But *why* should we desire that society should be in equilibrium with itself? What is it that makes this condition valuable to us? This is the question which we are forced to ask; and it is a similar question that recurs in connection with the view of Mr. Spencer, and with all similar theories. These writers answer questions of natural history instead of questions of Ethics. [3] What they say may throw considerable light on the way in which

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 418. Sometimes, I think, Mr. Alexander forgets this. Thus, in his *Moral Order and Progress*, p. 307, he says—"Evil is *simply* that which has been rejected and defeated in the struggle with the good."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 419. *Cf.* also Mr. Alexander's article on "The Idea of Value," in *Mind*, vol. i., No. 1 (Jan., 1892), especially pp. 44—48.

[3] This point is very fully brought out in Sorley's *Ethics of Naturalism*, Part II., chap. ix. A short passage may here be quoted (pp. 270-1). "A man might quite reasonably ask why he should adopt as maxims of conduct the laws seen to operate in nature. The end, in this way, is not made to follow from the natural function of man. It is simply a mode in which the events of the world occur; and we must, therefore, give a reason why it should be adopted as his end by the individual agent. To him there may be no sufficient ground of inducement to become 'a self-conscious agent in the evolution of the universe.' From the purely evolutionist point of view, no definite attempt has been made to solve the difficulty. It seems really to go no deeper than Dr. John-

the moral life has developed, but does not answer the question—*Why* are we to choose that life? Why, we may ask, for instance, should we not seek to disturb the equilibrium of society, instead of promoting it? The answer to this could only be given by showing that that equilibrium is a *good*. Similarly, we may ask—Why may we not set ourselves in opposition to the stream of development which Mr. Spencer traces? Here again the answer to this question must be found by showing that the stream of development is leading to something which we recognize as *good*—something that can serve as an ideal for our moral nature. If this can be shown, then we may *start* from that ideal. That ideal then becomes the explanation of the process, instead of the process being an explanation of it. We go through the process of development *because* we are seeking that ideal. The end, and not the beginning, is thus taken as the principle of explanation.

§ **10**. Explanation by End.—Even in the case of the development of animal life it is not at all certain that the idea of teleology ought not to be introduced. Indeed even in Mr. Spencer's view of evolution there is a kind of teleology. The whole life of animals is regarded as a continual struggle after a perfect adjustment. That is the ideal by which the whole process is explained. And it is possible that on a deeper view of evolution the meaning of the process might be seen to have a still more profoundly teleological significance. So at least Emerson thought—

> "Striving to be man, the worm
> Mounts through all the spires of form."

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son's reply to Boswell, when the latter plagued him to give a reason for action: 'Sir,' said he, in an animated tone, 'it is driving on the system of life.'" *Cf.* Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, p. 82, Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 143-4 and 146-7.

So also Hegel thought.[1] But however this may be with regard to animal life, and to the life of nature generally, there can be no doubt that we must apply teleological ideas in Ethics. Indeed, as we have seen, this is explicitly stated by Mr. Herbert Spencer himself. But if this is the case, then the attempt to explain the moral life *from behind* cannot be of much avail. We must explain it rather by what lies in front of us, by the ideal or end that we have in view. How this may be done, may be indicated by a brief reference to the work of the most distinguished of those thinkers in recent times who have attempted it—the late Professor T. H. Green.

§ **11.** GREEN'S VIEW OF ETHICS.—Green's doctrine is stated in his great work entitled *Prolegomena to Ethics,* probably the most considerable contribution to ethical science that has been made in England during the present century.[2] Green taught that the essential element in the nature of man is the rational or spiritual principle within him. Man has appetite, as animals have, and, like them, he has sensations and mental images; but these, and everything else in man's nature, are modified by the fact that he has reason. His appetites are not *mere* appetites: his sensations are not *mere* sensations. In his appetites there is always more or less explicitly present the consciousness of an end—*i. e.* they are desires and not mere appetites.[3] In his sensations

[1] It is still more remarkable (though perhaps not so consistent) to find such a pronounced materialist as Dühring objecting strongly to the Darwinian attempt to explain evolution by the mere struggle for existence, and urging the adoption of a more teleological view. See his *Cursus der Philosophie*, II. iii.

[2] The account of Green's doctrine contained in Sidgwick's *History of Ethics* (pp. 259-260) is unhappily very inadequate.

[3] I may say that Green seems to me to exaggerate the extent to which animal appetites are transmuted in human consciousness. Perhaps,

there is always more or less explicitly present the element of knowledge—*i. e.* they are perceptions and not mere sensations. This is due to the fact that man is rational, self-conscious, spiritual. This is the essential fact with regard to man's nature. Green points out, indeed, that even in animal life, and even in inanimate nature, we must assume the presence of a rational principle—just as Mr. Spencer points out that even in animal life there is present the principle of adjustment. But in nature the presence of this principle is implicit. We must believe that it is there, but it is concealed or imperfectly manifested. In man it is explicit; or, at any rate, it is *becoming* explicit. And the significance of the moral life consists in the constant endeavour to make this principle more and more explicit—to bring out more and more completely our rational, self-conscious, spiritual nature. How exactly this is to be done, Green admits, it is not easy to answer, just because our rational nature is not yet completely developed. The moral life is to be explained by its end; but as we have not reached the end, we cannot, in any complete form, give the explanation. Still, we can to a considerable extent see in what way our rational nature has been so far developed, and in what direction we may proceed to develop it more fully.

This is a brief statement of Green's point of view; and it certainly appears to furnish us with an answer to the question with which we set out—*viz.* the question how we are to determine which is the higher and which is the lower among our universes of desire. Green's answer is—the highest

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however, my own statement above (chap. v., § 3) contains an exaggeration on the opposite side. At any rate, the main point here is that the *essence* of man consists in his rational nature, not in anything that he has in common with a mere animal (if there is any *mere* animal).

universe is that which is most completely rational. The meaning of this, however, must be somewhat more fully considered, in relation to the point of view that we have already tried to develop.

§ **12**. THE TRUE SELF.—We have seen that there are a great number of universes within which a man may live. In some of these men live only for moments at a time: in others they live habitually. Some of them are universes within which no abiding satisfaction can be found. The universe of mere animal enjoyment is of this nature. Its pleasures soon pall upon the appetite. In others we find that we have a more permanent resting-place. Now the nature of the universe within which a man habitually lives constitutes, as we have seen, his character or self. If he chances to be led into some other universe by a sudden impulse or unexpected temptation, the man scarcely considers himself to be responsible for his actions within that universe. He says that he was *not himself* when he acted so. He was not within his own universe.

But there is no limited universe within which we can find permanent satisfaction. As we grow older, we get crusted over with habits, and go on, with little misgiving, within the universe to which we have grown accustomed. But if the universe is an imperfect one, we are not without occasional pricks of conscience—*i. e.* we sometimes become aware of a higher universe within which we ought to be living.

> "Just when we are safest, there's a sunset-touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
> A chorus-ending from Euripides—
> And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears,
> As old and new at once as nature's self,
> To rap and knock and enter in our soul."[1]

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[1] Browning—*Bishop Blougram's Apology*.

On such occasions we begin to feel that even in the life that we ordinarily live we are *not ourselves*. There is a want of permanence in our habitual universe, just as there is in those into which we find ourselves occasionally drifted by passion and impulse. Just as we do not feel satisfied in these, but escape from them as rapidly as we can, and declare that we were not ourselves when we were in them; so we become conscious at times that even in our habitual lives there is something unsatisfying, and if it were not for the frost of custom we would make our escape from these also, and declare that in them also we are not ourselves. Where, then, is the universe within which we should find an abiding satisfaction? What is the true self?

The true self is what is perhaps best described as the rational self. It is the universe that we occupy in our moments of deepest wisdom and insight. To say fully what the content of this universe is, would no doubt, as Green points out,[1] be impossible. The content of the universe of rational insight is as wide as the universe of actual fact. To live completely in that universe would be to understand completely the world in which we live and our relations to it, and to act constantly in the light of that understanding. This we cannot hope to do. All that we can do is to endeavour to promote this understanding more and more in ourselves and others, and to act more and more in a way that is consistent with the promotion of this understanding. So to live is to be truly *ourselves*.

§ **13**. THE REAL MEANING OF SELF-CONSISTENCY.—From this point of view we are better able to appreciate the real significance of the Kantian principle, that the supreme law of morals is to be self-consistent. This law, as we pointed out, seemed to supply us with a mere form without matter.

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, § 288, p. 310.

It is not so, however, if we interpret the statement to mean not merely that we are to be *self-consistent*, but that we are to be *consistent with the self*—*i. e.* with the true self. For this principle has a content, though the content is not altogether easy to discover. Kant's error, we may say, consisted in this, that he understood the term Reason in a purely abstract way. He opposed it to all the particular content of our desires; whereas, in reality, reason is relative to the whole world which it interprets. The universe of rational insight is the universe in which the whole world—including all our desires—appears in its true relations. To occupy the point of view of reason, therefore, is not to withdraw from all our desires, and occupy the point of view of mere formal self-consistency; it is rather to place all our desires in their right relations to one another. The universe of rational insight is a universe into which they can all enter, and in which they all find their true places. The meaning of this will, it is hoped, become clearer as we proceed.

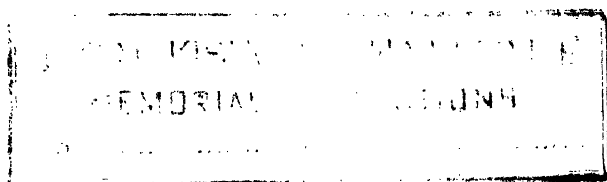
§ **14**. THE MEANING OF OUGHT.—We have now reached the central point in the problem of Ethics. We now see in some degree what is the meaning of *ought*—what is the true significance of the ethical imperative. The *ought* of duty is not a command imposed upon us from without. It is simply the voice of the true self within us. Conscience is the sense that we are *not ourselves*[1]; and the voice of duty is the voice that says, "to thine own self be true."

But we are now led to another problem. We see what "ought" means; but there is an implication in this term which we have not yet considered. There is the implication of *power*. There would be no meaning in saying that we ought to do anything which it is impossible for us to do.

[1] *Cf.* below, chap. ix., § 13.

It is a legitimate inference, as Kant pointed out,[1] to say—"You ought, therefore you can." To say that we ought to do anything implies that we are free to do it. Thus from the problem with regard to the meaning of "ought," we are naturally led to the problem with regard to the Freedom of the Will—a very vexed question. After dealing with this problem, so far as our limits will permit, we shall be in a position to consider the relation of the individual to society, and in this way to bring out more clearly the content of the moral life.

[1] See his *Critique of Practical Reason*, Part I., Book I., chap. i., § 6 (Abbott's translation, pp. 117—119).



CHAPTER VIII.

THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
The youth replies, *I can*."—EMERSON.

§ 1. FREEDOM ESSENTIAL TO MORALS.—We have just noted that a certain kind of freedom is demanded by the moral imperative. There would be no meaning in an "ought" if it were not accompanied by a "can." It does not follow, however, that the "can" refers to an immediate possibility. A man ought to be wise, for instance; but wisdom is a quality that can only be gradually developed. What can be done at once is only to put ourselves in the way of acquiring it. Similarly, we ought to love our neighbours. But love is a feeling that cannot be produced at will.[1] We can only put ourselves in the way of cultivating kindly affections. But it would be absurd to say that a man ought to add a cubit to his stature or to live for two hundred years. He cannot even put himself in the way of attaining

[1] For this reason Kant even denies that love is a duty. See *Metaphysic of Morals*, section I. (Abbott's translation, pp. 15-16). But love can be cultivated, though it cannot be directly produced. Kant's view on this and kindred points is due to the absolute antithesis which he makes between Reason and Feeling. *Cf.* Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii., pp. 280—282. See also above, chap. iv., § 9, the Note at the end of chap. iv., p. 70, and chap. v., § 10; and below, chap. xiii., § 2.

these ends, and they cannot therefore form any part of his duty. Now if a man's will were absolutely determined by his circumstances, it would be strictly impossible for him to become anything but that which he does become, and consequently it would be impossible that he ought to be anything different. There would thus be no "ought" at all. Moral imperatives would cease to have any meaning.[1] If, then, there is to be any meaning in the moral imperative, the will must not be absolutely determined by circumstances, but must in some sense be free.

§ 2. NECESSITY ESSENTIAL TO MORALS.—Nevertheless, there is a sense also in which necessity is required for the moral life. The moral life consists, as we have endeavoured to point out, in the formation of character. Now to have a character is to live habitually in a certain universe. And in any given universe desires have a definite position with reference to one another; so that there can be no doubt which is to give place to another. Hence the more decidedly a character is formed, the more uniform will be its choice and its action. Nay, even in the case of characters that are imperfectly formed, any uncertainty that exists with regard to the action is due only to our imperfect knowledge. It is difficult to predict what will be done by

[1] Hence purely determinist writers (see below, § 3, *note*), when they are quite consistent, deny the existence of any absolute "ought," and regard Ethics not as a normative science, but as an ordinary natural history science—investigating what men do or tend to do, not what they ought to do. This is the view, for instance, which is taken by Schopenhauer (who, in spite of his emphasis on the Will, was to all intents a pure determinist). *Cf.* Janet's *Theory of Morals*, p. 138. Another good example of pure determinism, accompanied by the denial of the unity of the self, leading to a natural history view of Ethics, will be found in Simmel's *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*. Bentham's attitude to some extent illustrates the same thing. See above, p. 98, *note*.

a man who is continually shifting from one universe to another. But his action would be fully foreseen by any one who knew exactly the relation in which these universes stand to one another in his mental life. And not only is this true as a fact with regard to the moral lives of men, but it *must* be true if the moral life is to have any meaning. The moral life means the building up of character, *i. e.* it means the forming of definite habits of action. And if a habit of action be definite, it is uniform and predictable. Now necessity is often understood to mean nothing more than uniformity. In this sense, then, necessity is required for the moral life.

§ 3. The true Sense of Freedom.—It is apt to seem as if there were a certain contradiction between these two demands of the moral life. But there is no contradiction when we observe precisely what is the nature of the freedom and what is the nature of the necessity that is demanded. The necessity means simply the uniform activity of a given character. The freedom, on the other hand, means simply the absence of determination by anything outside the character itself. A vicious man in a sense can, and in a sense cannot, do a good action. He cannot, in the sense that a good action does not issue from such a character as his. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. But he can do the action, in the sense that there is nothing to prevent him *except his character—i. e.* except himself. Now a man cannot stand outside of himself, and regard a defect in his own character as something by which his action is hindered. If he can, *but for himself*, he *can* in the only sense that is required for morality. To be free means that one is determined by nothing but oneself.[1] What this means,

[1] Those writers who insist on the fact that there is determination or law in all our actions, and who on this ground deny freedom, are com-

however, we must endeavour to explain somewhat more fully.

§ 4. Animal Spontaneity.—Consider in what sense an animal is free. As compared with a plant or a stone, it evidently has a certain spontaneity. It is not moved from without, as a stone seems to be, but conducts itself in accordance with its own inner feelings. It should be observed, however, that even a stone is not moved entirely from without. No rock was ever thrown to the ground without its own consent. What we call the laws of nature in obedience to which stones are raised or thrown down, are laws of the stone's nature as well as of things outside of it. "The hyssop grows in the wall, because the whole universe cannot prevent it from growing."[1] This is as true as to say that it grows there because the whole universe *makes* it grow. The law is within it quite as truly as it is without it. In this sense Hegel was no doubt right in saying that the planets run round the sun freely like the immortal gods. "The sun attracts them," it is said. But the sun could not attract them unless they were willing to be attracted—*i. e.* unless it lay in their own nature to be attracted. Still, we do not usually think of the planets, or of inanimate nature generally, as having any spontaneity in its motions. And rightly. The movements of the planets are not determined by themselves; for they have no selves. The law is as truly within them as without them; but it is also as truly without them

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monly known as Necessarians or Determinists. On the other hand, those who insist on liberty to such an extent as to deny all law or determination in human conduct, are called Libertarians or Indeterminists. It is now generally recognized that these two schools of writers simply represent opposite sides of the same truth, and that the idea of *self-determination* combines the two sides.

[1] Carlyle, I think, says this; I do not remember where.

as within them. It is, as we say, a "law of nature" generally, and does not belong to any one thing in particular. There is no centre to which the movement can strictly be referred. In the case of an animal it is different. Here there *is* a self, there is a centre of reference—*viz.* the consciousness of the animal itself. It is from that point that the movement proceeds, and we say therefore that it is spontaneous.

§ **5**. HUMAN LIBERTY.—Yet a mere animal has not a self in the full sense of the term. Its self is simply the feeling of the moment. It has not a definite universe of reference. A man's self, on the other hand, is the universe in which he habitually lives. For this reason, a man is free in a sense in which an animal is not free. If an animal could be supposed to think and speak, it could not refer its actions to itself, but only to its impulse at this or that moment.[1] No doubt, there would be a certain continuity and predictability in its impulses; yet at each moment they would have a certain independence, and would not refer to a common centre. This, of course, means simply that the animal does *not* think, and consequently does not bring the moments of its consciousness to a unity. Man, on the other hand, lives within the universe of his character. In so far as his momentary impulses do not reflect and reveal that character, he does not regard them as, strictly speaking, his own. His acts are his own only when he *is himself* in doing them—*i. e.* when they flow from the centre of his habitual universe. He has thus a centre of action which has a certain relative permanence; and for this reason his

[1] *Cf.* Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 158-9. "An animal which does not have the power of proposing ends to itself is impelled to action by its wants and appetites just as they come into consciousness. It is *irritated* into acting." See also Giżycki's *Introduction to the Study of Ethics*, chap. vi.

acts are free in a sense in which the movements of a mere animal, though spontaneous, are not free.[1]

§ **6.** THE HIGHEST FREEDOM.—We see, then, that there are higher and lower senses of freedom. Even a stone is not simply determined from without. An animal has spontaneity. But man has freedom in a higher sense than either of these. This fact naturally suggests the inquiry whether the ordinary freedom of a man is freedom in the highest sense, or whether there is the possibility of a freedom of a still higher kind.

The answer seems clearly to be that there is a freedom of a still higher kind. This follows at once from the fact that there is a *self* of a still higher kind. We have already seen that the only true or ultimate self is the rational self. Consequently, the only true or ultimate freedom will be the freedom that consists in acting from this self as a centre. This is recognized even in ordinary language. The man who acts irrationally is said to be "enslaved by his passions." He is thus not thoroughly free. And indeed, as we have already observed,[2] there are times when a man feels that his

[1] Those writers who have insisted on determination, to the exclusion of freedom, have generally also denied the unity of the individual self or character. Thus Hume (who may be regarded as the founder of the determinist school in modern times) says (*Treatise on Human Nature*, Book I., Part IV., section vi.): "When I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure"; and he consequently concludes that the self or personality is "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement." Mill also accepted this view. See his *Examination of Sir W. Hamilton*, chap. xii. For criticisms of it, see Green's edition of Hume, vol. i., Introd., § 342, and Dr. Ward's article on "Psychology" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, p. 39. *Cf.* also the remark on Simmel, above, p. 141, *note*.

[2] See above, pp. 136-7.

irrational acts are not, strictly speaking, *his own*. His true self lies deeper. This seems to have been felt by the writer of the Pauline Epistles, when he referred his shortcomings not to himself, but to "sin that dwelleth in me." Here he identifies himself with the higher or rational self. Yet in another passage he seems to identify himself rather with the lower self, when he says, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me." Here "I" refers to the lower self—the habitual character of the individual—while the higher or true self is referred to as "Christ," living in him and gradually coming to complete realization. There are, in fact, we may say, three selves in every man. There is the self that is revealed in occasional impulses which we cannot quite subdue, the "sin" that, after all, dwelleth in us. On the other hand, there is the permanent character, the universe in which we habitually live.[1] And finally there is the true or rational self, in which alone we feel that we can rest with satisfaction—the "Christ" that liveth in us, and in whom we hope more and more to abide. And, as it is said again, "his service is perfect freedom." There is no other perfect freedom. The only ultimate self is the rational self; and the only ultimate freedom is the freedom that we have when we are rational.

§ 7. VICE INVOLUNTARY.—From this point of view, we can understand what Socrates meant when he said that vice is involuntary. Socrates held, as we have already observed, that virtue is a kind of knowledge or insight. In as far as we clearly know what is right we necessarily do it. When

[1] Even this may not be quite simple. "Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in dieser Brust," said Faust ("Two souls, alas! live in this breast of mine"); and the same could, in some degree, be said by most men. "I am double," said Renan; "sometimes one part of myself laughs, while the other cries." In cases of madness, the two selves often become very distinctly separated.

we act wrongly, therefore, our action is involuntary. We do so because we know no better; for "no one is willingly deprived of the good." Against this it is commonly urged that we often know what is right and yet do what is wrong; and the saying is quoted, *video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.* But it is evident that Socrates was right. Vice *is* involuntary. When we act wrongly, we do not clearly know what is right. For to know clearly what is right would be to see it in its true relations to the world of fact. And we could see it in this way only if we were living within the universe of perfect reason. And if we were living in this universe, our desires would present themselves to us in the order of force which belongs to the rational universe. Our will would consequently choose what seems best within the universe of right reason—*i. e.* we should act rightly. It follows that when we act wrongly we do not clearly know what is right. Vice is, therefore, in this sense,[1] involuntary.

§ 8. DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS FREEDOM.—It follows from what has now been said that we ought not to say that we *are* free, but rather that we are *developing towards* freedom. We shall be perfectly free only when we are perfectly rational; and that will be—when?

But is not this, it may be asked, destructive of the moral life? What becomes of Kant's "You ought, therefore you can"? May we not invert it, and say, "We cannot, therefore we need not"? Our utmost efforts will never raise us

[1] Observe that this does not mean that a vicious act is not *willed*—*i. e.* accepted by the agent as a concrete object to be aimed at. It is *willed* by the agent, and in this sense is voluntary. But when the agent wills it, he is not, in the highest meaning of the term, *free*. It is only in this latter sense that his action may be said to be involuntary. The saying of Socrates is, consequently, rightly enough regarded as a paradox; but it is a paradox that contains an important truth.

to a perfect life; "for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it." May we not say, then, that we ought not to be perfect? The answer is—We may if we like; but if we do, we sink from the moral point of view. We sink, in fact, from the *human* point of view. For as human beings we are bound to identify ourselves with the rational self. I cannot say to myself, "I am the man who thinks that two and two make five, who prefers push-pin to poetry, and would serve Mammon rather than God." Perhaps this is true; but I dare not accept it as the truth. I am bound to say rather, "I am the man who *ought* to think that two and two make four, to prefer poetry to push-pin, and God to Mammon." I must, as a human being, take my stand on the rational self. I have not reached it—perhaps I can never reach it; but if I give up the struggle, I sink to the level of the beasts. A man is bound to regard his ideal self as his true self. He cannot take up a purely statical attitude. He who can say, "I am that I am," is either God or devil. A man must say, "I will be that I ought to be." He may be foredoomed to failure, but he cannot surrender without ceasing to be man. He may be a poor creature, and he may be destined always to remain a poor creature. He cannot help it. But this at least he can do and must do. He must say—This poor creature is not "I": that is "I" forward there! What I ought to be I must be and can be—or else let me perish in the attempt! For indeed if I cannot be it, the only reason is certainly that I do not realize with sufficient clearness that I ought to. If I saw with perfect clearness what I ought, I not only could but must and would do it. Thus there is no escape, after all, from Kant's saying, "You ought, therefore you can." You certainly can if you recognize with sufficient clearness that you ought. So soon as a new ideal is clearly

presented to us, the universe of our present lives may be gradually readjusted to it.

§ 9. Liberty of Indifference.—Some writers, however, have not been satisfied with freedom in the sense that has now been explained, but have thought that the moral life requires a different sort of liberty. They have thought that, at any given moment in our lives, it must be possible for us to choose any one of a number of alternative lines of conduct, quite irrespectively of our characters. They have thought, in fact, that, for true freedom, it is necessary that we should be undetermined even by our characters. This kind of freedom is usually referred to as "Liberty of Indifference." But it seems clear that such liberty as this is not only absurd in itself,[1] but is actually contrary to the demands of the moral life.[2] It amounts to this—that we

[1] *Cf.* Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, p. 52. "We all want freedom. Well then, what is freedom? 'It means not being made to do or be anything. "Free" means "free from."' And are we to be quite free? 'Yes, if freedom is good, we cannot have too much of it.' Then, if 'free'= 'free *from*,' to be quite free is to be free from everything—free from other men, free from law, from morality, from thought, from sense, from —Is there anything we are *not* to be free from? To be free from everything is to be—nothing. Only nothing is quite free, and freedom is abstract nothingness. If in death we cease to be anything, then there first we are free, because there first we are—not." Mr. Bradley is, of course, here referring to freedom in the sense of Liberty of Indifference. It may seem a harsh judgment to pass on a theory which has been supported by many able writers, that it is "absurd in itself." But in fact most even of those who support it, are ready to admit that it is contrary to reason. They generally hold, with Dr. Johnson, that "all reasoning is against free will, all experience for it." But surely experience is not for Liberty of Indifference. It is only for self-determination; and against this there are no arguments.

[2] A complete discussion of this difficult question would evidently carry us far beyond the limits of such a handbook as the present. I have touched upon it here only so far as seemed necessary to bring out its bearing upon Ethics. For fuller discussion the reader may be referred

are to be free not only from external circumstances, but *from ourselves.* We are not to be determined even by our characters—*i. e.* not even by ourselves. But if we are not to be determined by ourselves, by what are we to be determined? By some caprice of the moment? By some accidental impulse? Or by nothing at all? If an act does not issue from ourselves, it is not our act at all. We cannot hold ourselves responsible for it. Remorse[1] in such a case would be an absurdity. An act for which I feel myself responsible must be my own act—*i. e.* it must issue from the universe of my character. "Liberty of Indifference" thus appears to be both absurd in itself and contrary to the demands of morality.[2]

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to Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book II., chap. i., Green's *Collected Works*, pp. 308—333, Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, Essay I., Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book I., chap. v., Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, Book II., chap. iii., Martineau's *Study of Religion*, Book III., chap. ii., Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*, pp. 336—341, Giżycki's *Introduction to the Study of Ethics*, chap. vi., Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, pp. 278—293, and Seth's *Freedom as Ethical Postulate*. *Cf.* also Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, Part I., chap. iii., Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 50—54, Lotze's *Practical Philosophy*, chap. iii., and Calderwood's *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*, Part II., chaps. iii. and iv. The views of Green, Bradley, Caird, Alexander, Giżycki, Dewey, and Muirhead are in the main in agreement with that here stated. Lotze, Martineau, Calderwood, and Seth defend freedom, though generally rejecting Liberty of Indifference in its most extreme form. Sidgwick takes up a neutral position. Stephen is a Determinist, and does not fully recognize the fact of self-determination. The same remark applies on the whole to the excellent discussion of Freedom in Simmel's recent *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, Vol. II., chap. vi.

[1] See below, pp. 256-7.

[2] This point is admirably brought out in Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 161-2. It is remarkable that Cudworth, in his *Treatise of Free Will*, while asserting Liberty of Indifference, yet admits that it is not the highest kind of freedom, and does not attribute it to God. See especially §§ xiv. and xvii. So also Giordano Bruno. *Cf.* Simmel, *loc. cit.*, p. 154.

Note on Responsibility.

In modern times the interest in the question of the Freedom of the Will has been stimulated mainly by the desire to have a clear view of human responsibility.[1] The Mediæval conceptions of Heaven and Hell gave special force to this desire. God was thought of as a supreme Judge, standing outside the world, and apportioning infinite rewards and punishments in accordance with the lives which men had led, or, as some rather thought, in accordance with the beliefs which they had entertained. This doctrine presented serious difficulties. On the one hand, if Liberty of Indifference were asserted, if men were supposed to have the power of acting "without motives," of choosing a particular line of conduct without reference to their characters—*i. e.* to the universe of desires within which they have habitually lived—this appeared to be both unintelligible in itself and to involve too strong an assertion of the freedom of a merely created, finite, and dependent being. On the other hand, if man were held to be free only in the sense that he is self-determined, it appeared as if he could not be regarded as ultimately responsible for the building up of his own character, for the selection of the universe within which he was to live. This difficulty was felt as early as the time of St. Paul; and the only solution of it seems to lie in the acknowledgment that it is a mystery. *Credo quia absurdum.*

A similar difficulty, however, comes up even at the present time with reference to the responsibility of the individual to society. How, it is asked, can any one be regarded as responsible for the formation of his own character, seeing that he is born with particular inherited aptitudes and tendencies, and that the whole development of his life is determined by the moral atmosphere in which he is placed? In a sense we choose our own universes; but the "we," the self that chooses, is not an undetermined existence. We are ushered into the world with a certain predisposition to good or to evil in particular directions. Over this "original sin," or original virtue, which lies in our disposition from the first, we have no control. It is ourselves; it constitutes the particular nature which we inherit; and the directions in which it moves us depend on the circumstances in which we grow up. How, then, is society entitled to punish us for our offences? Even so firm an upholder of personal independence, and so stern an advocate of the punishment of crime, as Thomas Carlyle, admitted, and even insisted, that a man's

[1] *Cf.* below, chap. xiv., § 7.

character is an inheritance, and that the development of it is affected by bodily qualities. Thus, notwithstanding his strenuous insistence on the doctrine that every man is the shaper of his own destiny, we find him, in his Essay on Sir Walter Scott, making this candid admission: "Disease, which is but superficial, and issues in outer lameness, does not cloud the young existence; rather forwards it towards the expansion it is fitted for. The miserable disease had been one of the internal nobler parts, marring the general organization; under which no Walter Scott could have been forwarded, or with all his other endowments could have been producible or possible." What, then, becomes of responsibility? Have we not here a puzzle or antinomy as real as that with which the Mediæval Theology was perplexed?

But the answer to this has been already indicated.[1] If a man were a mere animal, the only reasonable course would be to take him as we find him. In that case, the only justification of punishment[2] would be found in the hope of effecting, by means of it, some improvement in the disposition of him who is punished. But a man cannot regard himself as a mere animal, nor can a society of men regard its members as simply animals. They must be regarded as beings animated by an ideal, which they are bound to aim at realizing, and which they *can* realize as soon as they become aware of the obligation. No man could regard it as an excuse for his evil conduct, that he is a mere brute beast, who knows no better. Nor could a society accept this as an excuse for any of its members. Whether a God, sitting outside as an external Judge, ought not to accept it as an excuse, is quite another question, with which we have here no concern. Our question is merely with regard to the way in which a man or a society of men must judge human conduct. And, from this point of view, it is quite sufficient to say that men must regard themselves and others as soldiers of the ideal; that those who fail to struggle for it must be treated as deserters, and those who deny its authority as guilty of *lèse majesté* against the dignity of human nature. There is no stone wall in the way of a man's moral progress. There is only himself. And he cannot accept himself as a mere fact, but only as a fact ruled by an ideal.

I cannot hope that such remarks as these will remove all difficulties from the mind of the student. The question, however, when pressed beyond a certain point, begins to be rather of metaphysical and theological than of strictly ethical importance.

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[1] Above, p. 148. [2] See below, chap xiv., § 6.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY.

"And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."—PAUL.

§ 1. THE SOCIAL SELF.—We have seen that the true self is the rational self. We have now to add that the true self is the social self. Up to this point we have spoken of the individual as if he were isolated and independent. But every individual belongs to a social system. An isolated individual is even inconceivable. Aristotle said truly that such a being must be "either a beast or a god." [1] Such a being could have no ideal self. He must either have realized his ideal like a god, or have no ideal to realize like a beast. For our ideal self finds its embodiment in the life of a society, and it is only in this way that it is kept before us. Not only so, but even the realization of our ideal seems to demand a society. For to have a perfectly rational self would involve that our universe should have a perfectly rational content. Now the only possible universe with a rational content seems to be a universe of rational beings. Hence we must go even beyond the saying of Aristotle, and say that even a God must be social. Even a God must have a rational universe in relation to Himself, and

[1] *Politics*, I. ii. 14: "He who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god (ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός)."

must consequently create a world of rational beings. But this is perhaps too profound a subject to be more than hinted at here. It is sufficient for our purpose to say that it is in relation to our fellow-men that we find our ideal life. "Where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them."[1] The "I" or ideal self is not realized in any one individual, but finds its realization rather in the relations of persons to one another. It embodies itself in literature and art, in the laws of a state, in the counsels of perfection which societies gradually form for themselves.

§ **2**. SOCIETY A UNITY.—Society, therefore, must be regarded as a unity—in fact, as we shall see shortly, as an organic unity. The parts of it are necessary to each other, as the parts of an animal organism are; and it is in all the parts in relation to one another, rather than in any one of them singly, that the true life is to be found. "We are members one of another." The ideal life of one requires others to complement it, and it is by mutual help that the whole develops towards perfection. This we shall see more fully in the sequel.[2]

§ **3**. EGOISM AND ALTRUISM.—This fact leads us to introduce a certain modification into the view of the moral life that has been presented up to the present point. We have spoken of the great end of the moral life as self-realization. But since an individual is a member of a social unity, his

[1] I do not mean to imply that this saying was originally intended to bear the sense here ascribed to it. But I think it has frequently been used by religious men to express that consciousness of unity, and of elevation into a higher universe, which arises when a number of men gather together in a common spirit and with a common aim for the advancement of their moral lives. Clifford's "tribal self" contains a similar idea.

[2] See sections 11 and 12 below. The present section is intended only as a preliminary statement.

supreme end will be not simply the perfecting of his own life, but also of the society to which he belongs. To a great extent the one end will indeed coincide with the other. Yet there appears to be a certain possibility of conflict. Now when we seek simply our own individual ends, this attitude is called *Egoism*; while the term *Altruism* is used to denote devotion to the ends of others. It is of great importance to consider the precise relation of these two attitudes to one another.[1]

§ **4**. MR. SPENCER'S CONCILIATION.—A good deal of attention has been given to this subject by Mr. Herbert Spencer,[2] and he has endeavoured to show how a conciliation may be effected between the two attitudes. He points out that either of them, if carried to an extreme, is self-destructive. If every one were to seek only his own ends, this would be a bad way of securing the ends even of any one individual. For each one stands frequently in need of help. On the other hand, if every one were to devote himself entirely to the good of others, this would be fatal to the good of others. For if each one neglected himself, he would deteriorate in his ability to help others. This point is worked out in a very interesting way by Mr. Spencer, and he comes to the conclusion that what we should aim at is neither pure Egoism nor pure Altruism, but a compromise between them. He thinks also that the more completely society becomes developed, the more will the two ends tend to become identical.

§ **5**. SELF-REALIZATION THROUGH SELF-SACRIFICE.—The truth seems to be, however, that there is even less opposition

[1] For further remarks, see Appendix B, Note IV.

[2] *Data of Ethics*, chaps xi. and xiv. *Cf.* Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, chap. vi., Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 70-1, and Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 152—154.

between Egoism and Altruism than that which Mr. Spencer recognizes. We can realize the true self only by realizing social ends. In order to do this we must negate the merely individual self, which, as we have indicated, is not the true self. We must realize ourselves by sacrificing ourselves.[1] The more fully we so realize ourselves, the more do we reach a universal point of view—*i. e.* a point of view from which our own private good is no more to us than the good of any one else. No doubt it must always be necessary for us to take more thought for our own individual development than for that of any one else; because each one best understands his own individual needs, and has the best means of working out his own nature to its perfection. But when this is done from the point of view of the whole, it is no longer properly to be described as Egoism. It is self-realization, but it is self-realization for the sake of the whole. In such self-realization the mere wishes and whims of the private self have been sacrificed, and we seek to develop ourselves in the same spirit and for the same ends as those in which and for which we seek to develop others. When we live in such a spirit as this, the opposition between Egoism and Altruism ceases. We seek neither our own good simply nor the good of others simply, but the good both of ourselves and of others as members of a whole.

§ 6. Ethics a Part of Politics.—We must recognize, in short, that man is, as Aristotle expressed it, "a political animal,"[2] and that Ethics cannot be satisfactorily treated except as a part of Politics—*i. e.* as a part of the study of Society. Our duties and our virtues are at every point dependent on our relations to one another. This fact was

[1] *Cf.* Caird's *Hegel*, pp. 210—218.

[2] "Πολιτικὸν ζῷον" (*Politics*, I. ii. 9). *Cf.* above, chap. ii., § 6, and below, § 8.

more clearly recognized by some of the ancient Greek thinkers than it has been by many in modern times—for, in modern times, partly on account of the influence of Christianity,[1] we have come to think more of the independence of the individual. It may be well, therefore, to glance for a moment at the way in which Ethics was regarded by Plato and Aristotle.

§ 7. PLATO'S VIEW OF ETHICS.—Plato was so strongly impressed with the social nature of man, and with the necessity of studying his life in relation to society, that, in his study of Ethics, instead of inquiring into the characteristics of a virtuous life in an individual, he endeavoured first to determine the characteristics of a good state. Having found what these are, he considered that it would be perfectly easy to infer what are the characteristics of a good man. Accordingly, the great ethical treatise of Plato is the *Republic*, in which he gives a sketch of an ideal state. It seemed to him—in accordance with a classification that was current among the Greeks—that there were four great virtues required for the existence of an ideal state, *viz.* wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice; and he thought that by observing exactly the significance of these virtues in the ideal state, he was able to see also what their exact significance must be in the life of the individual.[2]

§ 8. ARISTOTLE'S VIEW OF ETHICS.—Aristotle was not less convinced than Plato of the essentially social nature of man.

[1] Partly also, no doubt, because our wider international relationships have made it impossible for us to regard any one social system as a complete and exclusive unity in itself.

[2] For a fuller account of Plato's Ethics, see Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 35—51. Plato's *Republic* is a book of such interest and importance that every student ought to find some opportunity of reading it. It has been admirably translated both by Jowett and by Davies and Vaughan. See also below, chap. xii., § 6.

He began his great treatise on Ethics—perhaps the greatest that has ever been written—with a statement to the effect that Ethics is a part of Politics;[1] and the greater part of his treatise is occupied with an investigation of the virtues that are required in a good citizen of a state such as he found in Greece, and especially in Athens. He did indeed think that there was a kind of life, what he called the contemplative or speculative life (what we might call the life of science, or the life of the student), which was essentially higher than the life of political activity; but he considered that even this higher life must be built up on a basis of civic virtue.[2]

§ 9. COSMOPOLITISM.—The best Ethics of the Greeks, then, was based on the conception of the State, as the sphere within which the life of the individual is to be realized. It was only after the best days of the Greek state were over, when everything was beginning to be crushed under the iron heel of Rome,[3] that the Stoics began to speak of a *πολιτεία τοῦ κοσμοῦ*, and to think of the virtuous man (or "the wise man," as they called him) as one who is bound by no particular social ties, but lives an independent life of his own. Even the Stoics, however, recognized that the good man is a citizen; but they said that he ought to be "a citizen of the world," not of any particular community. In this way his social relations were made so vague that it

[1] In the wide sense in which the term Politics was used by the Greeks. Perhaps in modern times we should rather say that Ethics is a part of Social Philosophy. I have discussed this point in my *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, p. 48. On the relation between Ethics and Politics the student may profitably consult Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book I., chap. ii. See also Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, Book I., chap. iii., § 13.

[2] See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 51—70.

[3] See Caird's *Hegel*, pp. 204—207, Zeller's *Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics*, pp. 15-16, and Wallace's *Epicureanism*, chap. i.

almost seemed as if they might be altogether ignored. There was a great elevation in much of the teaching of the Stoics; but its want of any definite recognition of social relationships made it cold and hard, and somewhat destitute of content. And often it was inflated with a certain false pride in the independence of the individual.

§ **10.** CHRISTIAN ETHICS.—Christianity may be said to have gone to some extent in the same direction as Stoicism.[1] It also was essentially cosmopolitan, and it also tended to insist on the independent life of the individual.[2] Each one must "work out his own salvation," and must even forsake father and mother, and all other social relationships, in order to follow after the ideal life. Christianity represented the ideal life also as an imitation of a divine personality. Still, this was only one aspect of Christianity. It was no less emphatic in its insistence on the doctrine that we are "members one of another," and that in order to attain perfection we must recognize our essential unity both with each other and with God. The fact, however, that Christianity had to make its way in an adverse world rendered it necessary at first to insist somewhat strongly on the need of isolation. Its followers had to recognize that they were "not of the world," in order that they might keep their ideals pure. But after Christianity had to a great extent conquered the world, the other side—the social side—began to come out; and it is perhaps on that side now that its significance is greatest. Whether we look, therefore, to ancient or to modern systems of morals, it is not difficult to see that the

[1] Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 114-117.

[2] Christianity insisted on the dignity of man as man more strongly than even Stoicism had done. Stoicism proclaimed the dignity only of the wise man or philosopher; whereas Christianity was preached to "publicans and sinners."

recognition of the essentially social nature of man plays a prominent part in all that is best in them. This being the case, it will be well now to abandon the view of the mere individual life as that which is to be perfected, and to consider rather what is involved in the perfection of society.

§ **11.** THE SOCIAL UNIVERSE.—We must, however, first bring this point of view into relation to what has been already said with respect to the universes in which men habitually live. The life of every man, except an absolute madman, constitutes a more or less consistent whole. His actions fall within a more or less ordered scheme or plan. This whole, this plan, this totality of ends which a man pursues, we have agreed to describe as the universe within which he lives. Now this universe is always of a social character. Even the most original and even the most misanthropic of men cannot escape from the influence of the social environment by which they are formed. They inevitably imbibe something of what has been called "the ethos of their people," [1] the moral point of view adopted by the race or nation or body of men among whom, or under the influence of whom, their lives are spent. This moral atmosphere in which they pass their lives supplies the main part of that universe within which their desires find scope. So much is this the case that a man always, except when in some abnormal state of mind, thinks of himself, not as an isolated personality, but as a member of some body. This fact is emphasized even by a writer in some respects so individualistic as Mill.[2] "The social state," he says,[3] "is

[1] See below, p. 213.

[2] This element in Mill's teaching is due, as he partly acknowledges two pages later, to the study of Comte. *Cf.* his *Autobiography*, chap. iv.. Mill seems never to have made any serious effort to reconcile the elements which he derived from Comte with the general tenor of his philosophy.

[3] *Utilitarianism*, chap. iii., pp. 46-7.

at once so natural, so necessary, and so habitual to man, that, except in some unusual circumstances or by an effort of voluntary abstraction, he never conceives himself otherwise than as a member of a body; and this association is riveted more and more, as mankind are further removed from the state of savage independence. Any condition, therefore, which is essential to a state of society, becomes more and more an inseparable part of every person's conception of the state of things which he is born into, and which is the destiny of a human being." For this reason, when we consider any large society of human beings, bound together by a common language, a common law, a common religion, a common interest, we may say in a broad sense that they all live habitually within the same universe. They will all be distinguished no doubt by individual peculiarities; some of them will be more and some less affected by the common ties; and even from year to year and from day to day the universe of each will be liable to considerable variations. Still, speaking broadly, what the Germans call the *Sitten*, *i. e.* the moral habitudes of a man's time and place, tend to overshadow the peculiarities of his individual nature, and to have a strong determining influence on his view of life and on his conception of his own vocation. The necessity of making himself intelligible to those around him, the immense advantage of understanding them, and the need of constantly co-operating with them, would of themselves be sufficient to bring about a certain homogeneity among the members of a community. And when we add to this the influences of heredity and education, the force is overwhelming.

§ **12.** Society an Organism.—These considerations may partly enable us to understand an idea which has become prevalent in recent times among writers of very diverse

schools—the idea, namely, that a society of human beings is, as we have already indicated, to be regarded as an organic unity. The meaning of this is, broadly speaking, that just as we recognize a common life animating all the members of which a living body is composed, so we must acknowledge a similar unity among the members of a human society. This idea has sometimes been presented in the form of an analogy ; *i. e.* an attempt is made to draw parallels between the structures of human societies and the constitutions of animal or vegetable bodies.[1] Such analogies are no doubt occasionally suggestive ; but on the whole they supply more scope for ingenuity than for insight. The essential point seems to be that a human personality is never an isolated phenomenon. It is even inconceivable apart from certain relations to other personalities. The positive content of a man's moral life depends on these relationships : apart from them it would stagnate and die, very much as a limb dies when it is cut off from its organic connection with the body of which it forms a part. The whole of a man's moral life, all its purposes, all its meaning and value, receive their tone and colour from the ideals, the institutions, the moral habits, among which his life develops. This being so, it is important, in dealing with the moral life, not merely to consider the life of an individual man, but to have regard to the unity within which the main part of his life falls.[2] That, in spite of this

[1] This has been done, for instance, by Mr. Herbert Spencer in his *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i., part ii. ; and, in a still more elaborate form, by a German writer, Schäffle, in his *Bau und Leben des socialen Körpers*. Mr. Leslie Stephen (*Science of Ethics*, p. 126) thinks it preferable to speak of "social tissue" rather than of a "social organism," because there is no one abiding unity in which individuals are combined, as the parts are combined in an animal organism.

[2] On the organic nature of society, the student may be referred to Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, pp. 145—158, the Essay on "The Social

unity, the individual has yet in a sense a private life of his own, is a point that we shall have to consider at a later stage.

§ **13.** Relation of Conscience to the Social Unity. The importance of the social environment in the formation of what is commonly known as Conscience, has been noticed by a number of recent writers. This is emphasized, for instance, by Mill[1] in his treatment of the moral sanctions.[2] Without endorsing all that has been said on this subject by him and others, it may at least be convenient to sum up at this point what has to be said on the nature of Conscience, and to indicate its relations to our social universe.

It has been pointed out already that there is a certain ambiguity—indeed a twofold ambiguity—in the use of the term "Conscience."[3] It is sometimes used to express the

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Organism" by Prof. H. Jones in *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, and Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 155—162. I have expressed my own view on this subject at greater length in my *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, chap. iii. The student of the present handbook will probably understand this conception better after reading some of the following chapters—especially chaps. xii. and xv.

[1] *Utilitarianism*, chap. iii. *Cf.* also Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, p. 180, Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, chap. viii., Clifford's *Lectures and Essays* ("On the Scientific Basis of Ethics"), and Dr. Starcke's article on "The Conscience" in the *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. ii., No. 3 (April, 1892), pp. 342—372. Hegel, in his *Rechtsphilosophie*, was, I think, the first writer who clearly brought out the social bearing of Conscience. Much of what Hegel says on this point will be found reproduced, in an excellent form, in Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 182—199.

[2] On the meaning of the moral sanctions, see the Note at the end of chap. xiv.

[3] From Latin *conscire*, to be conscious of wrong. The Greek *συνείδησις*, the German *Gewissen*, and the Old English *inwit*, are similar in meaning. On ambiguity, see above, p. 54.

fundamental principles on which the moral judgment rests: at other times it expresses the principles adopted by a particular individual: at other times it means "a particular kind of pleasure and pain felt in perceiving our own conformity or non-conformity to principle."[1] The last seems to me to be the most correct acceptation of the term, except that I should prefer to say simply that it is a feeling of pain accompanying and resulting from our non-conformity to principle.[2] This sense of the term is evidently closely connected with the second sense; for the principles in connection with which an individual feels pain are of course the principles recognized by him. Nevertheless, the first sense also is not entirely excluded: for even if an individual is not clearly conscious of the deeper principles of reason on which the final moral judgment depends, he will yet often feel a vague uneasiness when he goes against them. It is difficult to believe, for instance, that St. Paul's conscience was entirely at rest in the midst of his persecuting zeal, even if he did think that he was "doing God service." However,

[1] Starcke, *loc. cit.*, p. 348.

[2] The element of mystery so often thought to attach to Conscience is, I think, largely due to the fact that it is often not accompanied by any direct *perception* of "conformity or non-conformity to principle." A man has often simply an uneasy feeling of having gone wrong, without being able to say precisely what principle he has violated. Further, I am doubtful whether it is correct to speak of a *pleasure* of Conscience. Conformity to moral principle is the normal state; and this may be regarded as the neutral point. Any violation of principle, on the other hand, brings pain. The performance of duty leaves a man still in the position of an "unprofitable servant." "Spiritual pride," of course, is accompanied by a certain pleasure; but should this be described as a pleasure of Conscience? I think Carlyle was right on this point: "To say that we have a clear conscience is to utter a solecism; had we never sinned, we should have had no conscience." See his Essay on "Characteristics." Conscience seems to me to be simply a pain accompanying the violation of moral principles. *Cf.* Appendix B, Note V.

in general no doubt the pain of Conscience accompanies only the violation of clearly recognized duty.

Now we have seen that the principles of duty which an individual recognizes are largely determined by the social universe which he inhabits. Hence his conscience also must be largely determined by this.[1] A man's conscience, we may say broadly, attaches itself to that system of things which he regards as highest. There is, indeed, a certain feeling of pain, analogous to that of Conscience, in connection with every universe in which a man lives, whether he regards it as the highest or not. Thus, there is a feeling of pain or shame[2] accompanying the violation of rules of etiquette or good taste, or even accompanying the consciousness of any physical defect or awkwardness, even if we are aware, not only that the universe within which these things lie is not of supreme importance, but even that it does not lie within the power of our will to avoid such deficiencies. Such a feeling might be called a *quasi*-Conscience.[3] On reflection we perceive either that we are

[1] Hence Clifford's idea of a "tribal self"—a self which belongs to a man's tribe or society, and to which his mere individual self is subordinate. Clifford says that a man's conscience is "the voice of his tribal self." The pain of his conscience is equivalent to his saying to himself, "In the name of my tribe, I hate myself for this treason which I have done." For the passage containing this statement, and some interesting remarks upon it, see Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 147-8.

[2] The Greek word *αἰδώς*, usually translated "shame," seems to be very nearly equivalent to what we understand by Conscience, at least in one of its aspects. *Cf.* Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, p. 321, and Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii., pp. 285-6; also below, p. 197, note 1.

[3] An excellent illustration of this is given by Mr. Muirhead (*Elements of Ethics*, p. 72) in an extract from Prof. Royce's *Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (pp. 53-4): "You ride, using another man's season ticket, or you tell a white lie, or speak an unkind word, and conscience, if a

not responsible for such shortcomings, or that they are not of serious moral importance; but the feeling at the moment is scarcely distinguishable from that of Conscience proper. Sometimes such a feeling may even conflict with Conscience. Thus, the performance of duty may involve a violation of etiquette; so that, in whichever way we act, we are bound to have the pain either of Conscience or of *quasi*-Conscience. Again, Conscience sometimes attaches itself to a universe which has been transcended. When we have recently passed from one universe to another, Conscience will generally be found to have lagged a little behind, and to attach itself to the older universe rather than to the newer one. "Feeling," as Mr. Muirhead says,[1] "is the conservative element in human life." It does not attach itself to a new universe, until we have thoroughly lived into it and made ourselves at home in it; nor does it sever itself from an old universe, until we have thoroughly broken off our connection with it. Hence a man will often feel a pain of Conscience, or *quasi*-Conscience, in doing an action which his reason has taught him to regard as perfectly allowable[2] or even as a positive duty; while, on the other hand, he will often

little used to such things, never winces. But you bow to the wrong man in the street, or you mispronounce a word, or you tip over a glass of water, and then you agonize about your shortcoming all day long; yes, from time to time for weeks. Such an impartial judge is the feeling of what you ought to have done." For similar illustrations, see Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, p. 323, and Spencer's *Principles of Ethics*, p. 337.

[1] *Elements of Ethics*, p. 74. *Cf.* the saying of Mr. Jacobs, quoted by Miss Wedgwood (*The Moral Ideal*, p. 233), "The thoughts of one generation form the feelings of its successor."

[2] "The contradiction between reason and feeling which some of us will recollect, when first we permitted ourselves to take a row or attend a concert on Sunday, is a good example from contemporary life" (Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 74).

be able to violate a recently discovered obligation without feeling any pain.[1] In general, however, the pains of Conscience attend any inconsistency with the principles which we recognize as highest; and these, in general, are the principles recognized as binding within the social universe in which we habitually live.[2]

With these remarks, we may pass on to the consideration of social ethics—*i. e.* to the consideration of the moral order within which the life of the individual is spent, and of the relation of the individual life to that moral order. In passing to this subject, we are making a transition from the discussion of pure ethical theory to the treatment of the concrete moral life to which ethical theory has to be applied. We are passing, in short, from Pure Ethics to Applied Ethics—so far at least as it is possible to draw any clear distinction between these.[3]

[1] Hence, partly, the frequency of "back-sliding" in converts to new principles. Conscience does not respond to their shortcomings with sufficient readiness. It may be noted here also that it is often possible to stifle Conscience by transferring ourselves from one universe to another. Thus, a man may perform, under the influence of fanatical zeal, acts of cruelty from which, in his normal state, he would shrink in horror. He stifles Conscience by escaping from the universe in which such acts are condemned into one in which they are rather approved. A good illustration of this is given by Macaulay in his account of the state of mind of the Master of Stair in sanctioning the massacre of Glencoe (*History of England*, chap. xviii.).

[2] For general discussion of the subject of Conscience, see Porter's *Elements of Moral Science*, Part I., chap. xvi., Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 182—206, and Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 70—78 and 220—224.

[3] Students who are acquainted with Aristotle's *Ethics* may be helped to see the bearing of this chapter by the remark that the main gist of it is simply that a man's social universe supplies him with the major premisses of his "practical syllogisms."

Note on Types of Ethical Theory.

It may be convenient at this point to sum up what has been stated with regard to the various schools of ethical thought. Broadly speaking, there have been two main currents in the history of Ethics. At nearly every period in the history of ethical speculation there has been a school which, in some form or other, represented pleasure as the supreme end, and another school which, in some form or other, found the supreme end in obedience to reason—or, at any rate, to law. The former school begins with the Cyrenaics, and proceeds through the Epicureans down to Hobbes, Hume, and the modern Utilitarians. The latter begins with the Cynics and Stoics, and finds its modern representatives in such writers as Clarke, Butler, Price, and, above all, Kant. But, along with these one-sided schools, the view of life as an organic unity has seldom been altogether without a witness. Nearly all the greatest philosophers—especially Plato, Aristotle, and Hegel—have, in some form, held this doctrine; and it is this doctrine that has been made prominent in modern times by the evolutionist school.

On the whole, then, we may say that there are three great ethical systems, which may be roughly characterized as the Intuitional, the Hedonistic, and the Evolutionary. Of each of these, again, we may say that there are two main varieties. Intuitional Ethics may be of the Common Sense variety or of the Rational variety. Hedonism may be Egoistic or Universalistic. Evolutionary Ethics may be Materialistic (explanation by means of the beginning) or Idealistic (explanation by means of the end). Now these various points of view ought not in reality to be regarded as competing systems, but rather as more or less adequate aspects of the truth—Idealistic Ethics, when rightly understood, including all the others. From the point of view that we have now reached, we may to a considerable extent appreciate the merits of each.

Common Sense Ethics has grasped a certain aspect of the truth. The laws of morals are commands which are intuitively presented to us, when we occupy the right attitude. They are the voice of the true self; and this voice is heard whenever we live within the universe of rational insight. The laws, indeed, which this voice gives forth, are rational principles; and consequently we ought to advance from Common Sense Intuitionism to Rational Intuitionism (like that of Kant). But since we are never able to occupy completely the rational point of view, the laws of morals are never quite intelligible to us, but appear

partly as intuitive principles that cannot be explained. In this way, Intuitionism, both of the Common Sense and of the Rational variety, may be justified. At the same time, they are justified not as independent systems of morals, but only as aspects in the point of view of Idealistic Evolution.

Egoistic Hedonism has also grasped a certain aspect of the truth. The universe within which we ought to live is that which gives us an abiding satisfaction ; and this satisfaction is accompanied with a feeling of perfect enjoyment. It errs, however, in asserting that all enjoyments may be placed side by side and quantitatively compared. It errs also in taking account only of the enjoyment of the individual; for the universe in which we find an abiding satisfaction is a universe in which all men must share together. Hence we must advance from Egoistic to Universalistic Hedonism. But this also errs in representing the pleasures of different individuals as quantitatively measurable against one another.

Finally, Materialistic Evolutionism has grasped a certain aspect of the truth. For there is a development from the lowest forms of the moral life to the highest; and even by examining the lowest, if we examine them with sufficient care, we may discover the nature of the highest. It is easier, however, and more natural to investigate the nature of the moral life in its highest forms rather than in its lowest: for it is in the highest forms that the ideal, by which we are guided throughout the whole development of the moral life, appears most clearly.

Thus all the Ethical Systems are seen to contain certain elements of the truth; and their full significance is brought out when they are regarded as aspects of the complete system of Evolutionary Idealism.

Of course, in what is here stated, reference is made only to the main lines of ethical speculation. There have been many subordinate currents. Some may think, for instance, that the theory of Adam Smith[1] deserves some notice. Adam Smith attempted to explain all moral principles by the operation of the force of sympathy. By sympathy we are able to put ourselves in the place of others to a certain extent; and we approve of their acts and feelings so far as we are able to sympathize with them. On the other hand, we approve of our own acts and feelings so far as we are persuaded that an "impartial spectator" would be able to sympathize with them. The sympathies

[1] Expounded in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. *Cf.* Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 213—218.

of the impartial spectator or typical man[1] are thus taken as the basis of moral judgment. This theory is highly interesting, and may be regarded as an anticipation of much that is said by modern evolutionist writers. It is, moreover, set forth by its author in that graceful and attractive style which was comparatively common in the last century, but which seems now to be almost a lost art in philosophic exposition. But, like the modern evolutionist theory, it is only an account of the way in which our sentiments of approval and disapproval grow up; and even as an account of this it must be regarded as one-sided.[2] It fails of being anything more, inasmuch as it contains no explanation of the principles by which the sympathies of the impartial spectator are determined.[3]

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[1] The place of the "impartial spectator" in Adam Smith's theory may be compared with that of the "typical man" in the theories of such modern evolutionist writers as Mr. Leslie Stephen and Mr. Georg Simmel.

[2] Some have thought that this one-sidedness was intentional on Adam Smith's part. Just as in *The Wealth of Nations* he confined his attention to the selfish side of human nature, so it has been held that in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* he limited himself to the sympathetic side. See Buckle's *History of Civilization*, vol. iii., p. 305 *sqq*. This view, however, appears to be erroneous. *Cf.* Hasbach's *Die allgemeinen philosophischen Grundlagen der von François Quesnay und Adam Smith begründeten politischen Oekonomie*, pp. 106-7; also Zeyss's *Adam Smith und die Eigennutz.* The one-sidedness of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* does not lie in the omission of self-interest, but in the absence of any conception of the unity of society, as distinguished from the interests and sympathies of its individual units. See also Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii., p. 320 *sqq.*, and Bonar's *Philosophy and Political Economy*, p. 163 *sqq.*

[3] "This sympathy," as Prof. Sidgwick says (*loc. cit.*, p. 205), "Adam Smith treats as an original fact of human nature, due to a spontaneous play of imagination." Hence Mr. Muirhead seems to be partly justified in classing Adam Smith among the Moral Sense writers (*Elements of Ethics*, p. 237), in spite of the fact that he expressly repudiates (*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part III., sect. ii., and Part VI., sect. iii., chap. iii.) the idea of a Moral Sense.

PART II.

THE MORAL LIFE.

CHAPTER X.

MORAL ORDER.

"There is no other genuine enthusiasm for humanity than one which has travelled the common highway of reason—the life of the good neighbour and the honest citizen."—GREEN.

§ 1. THE SOCIAL IMPERATIVE.—We have seen to some extent what the nature of the "ought" is. It is, as we may say, the law imposed by our ideal self upon our actual self. Since, however, the ideal self is the rational self, and since the rational self is not realized in isolation, but in a society of human beings, it follows that this "ought" is imposed on societies as well as on individuals. As Mr. Herbert Spencer says,[1] "we must consider the ideal man as existing in the ideal social state"; and in considering such an ideal we pass a criticism not only on existing men, but on existing social states. Not only can we say that an individual *ought* to act in such and such a way, but we can also say that a society *ought* to have such and such a constitution.[2] In so far as an individual acts as he ought to act, we say that his conduct is right, and that he is a good, upright, or moral man. In so far as a society is constituted as it ought to be, we say that it is a well-ordered

[1] *Data of Ethics*, chap. xvi., § 106.

[2] It may be asked, On whom is this "ought" imposed? The answer is, on the society as a whole, and more particularly on its politicians and other public men.

society, and that its constitution is just. In each case we compare actually existing men or states with the ideal of a rational man and a rationally constituted state. The latter of these we must now briefly consider.[1]

§ 2. JUSTICE.—"Blessed," it is said, "are they that hunger and thirst after justice."[2] They have perhaps most often been crucified, beheaded, banished, or imprisoned;[3] but their work endures.

A just arrangement of society may be briefly defined as one in which the ideal life of all its members is promoted as efficiently as possible. The constitution of a society is, therefore, unjust when large classes in it are so enslaved by others as to be unable to develop their own lives. It is unjust, for instance, when there is any class in it so poor, or so hard-worked, or so dependent on others, as to be unable to cultivate their faculties and make

[1] A complete discussion of this subject belongs rather to Politics or Social Philosophy than to Ethics. But it seems necessary to consider it here, in so far as it can be dealt with from a purely ethical point of view. Some of the points dealt with here are somewhat more fully discussed in my *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, chaps. v. and vi. English writers on Ethics have, as a rule, not given much attention to the subjects referred to in this chapter. Reference may, however, be made to Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, chap. iii., Porter's *Elements of Moral Science*, Part. II., chaps. xiii.—xvi., Rickaby's *Moral Philosophy*, and Clark Murray's *Introduction to Ethics*, Book II., Part II., chap. i. For fuller treatment the student must consult such works as those of Höffding and Paulsen. Some of the points are also referred to by Prof. Giżycki, whose work has been adapted for the use of English readers by Dr. Stanton Coit. Hegel's *Philosophie des Rechts* must, however, still be regarded as the model for the treatment of this whole subject.

[2] The Greek word δικαιοσύνη, translated "righteousness," may equally well be rendered by "justice."

[3] "Die wenigen die was davon erkannt,
. . . . .
Hat man von je gekreuzigt und verbrannt."—
Goethe's *Faust*.

progress towards the perfection of their nature.[1] It is unjust when the idle are protected and set in power, and the laborious are crushed down and degraded.

To free society from such arrangements as these has been one of the chief efforts, perhaps the chief effort, of the wise and good in all ages; and there are certainly few things to which a student of Ethics should give more attention than the methods by which this may be done. The subject is, however, much too complicated for such an elementary treatise as this; and all that we can here do is to indicate some of the main points that have to be attended to in constructing a just order of society.[2]

§ 3. Law and Public Opinion.—The first thing to be observed is that a just arrangement of society can be only to a certain extent *enforced*. The saying has often been quoted—

> "How small of all that human hearts endure
> That part which kings or laws can cause or cure!"

And it is partly true, if it be taken to apply simply to that which can be directly and immediately accomplished by positive laws. Laws are inefficient when a people is by nature lawless; and when a people has become orderly or wise, laws may often be allowed to sink into abeyance. The conditions of life are continually changing, and positive

[1] In a just social state, every human being must be treated as an absolute end. It follows from this, however, that no one can be treated as *the* absolute end: otherwise every one else would be treated only as a means with reference to this one. Hence every one must be treated at once as means and as end.

[2] The accounts of Justice given by Plato and Aristotle (*Republic* and *Ethics*) have never been surpassed. For more modern discussions, the student may be referred to Mill's *Utilitarianism*, chap. v., Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., chap. v., and *Principles of Political Economy*, Book III., chaps. vi. and vii., and Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, chap. v., §§ 35—39. See the Note at the end of this chapter.

laws which were beneficial at one time begin gradually to have a pernicious effect. It is, consequently, in many departments of life of far more importance to try to develop good habits of action and of opinion in a people than to furnish it with hard and fast positive enactments.[1] Nevertheless, the sphere of positive law is a great one. Public opinion grows very slowly, and there are always considerable bodies in a community who are unaffected by it, unless it takes the form of definite laws, with punishments attached. Sometimes, after such laws have fulfilled their purpose, it becomes desirable to repeal them. St. Paul said of the Jewish law that it was "a schoolmaster to lead men to Christ"; meaning that as soon as men grasped the true meaning of the moral ideal they could dispense with the narrow injunctions of the law, which, nevertheless, were necessary as a preparation. So it is with nearly all laws. They are too rigid and formal for human beings, as soon as they attain to true freedom; but they are necessary at first as a check upon licentiousness. What men do at first from fear, they learn by and by to do from habit, and afterwards from conscious will. Law comes first, then habit, then virtue.[2]

[1] This seems to express the element of truth in much of what is said by Mr. H. Spencer in his famous book, *The Man* versus *the State*.

[2] Mr. Muirhead quotes with approbation (*Elements of Ethics*, pp. 33-9) a story about Professor Rogers:—"A distinguished churchman is said to have remarked to the late Professor Thorold Rogers, 'We must have compulsory religion, because otherwise we shall have none at all,' to which the Professor replied that he didn't see the difference. The same might be said of compulsory morality: it is equivalent to no morality at all." This is of course true; yet compulsory morality may form an education towards true morality. This would also have been at least a partial answer to Professor Rogers. *Cf.* Höffding's *Outlines of Psychology*, p. 76. It should be added that Mr. Muirhead notices this qualification at a later stage, pp. 167-8.

§ 4. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS.—The forces of law and of public opinion are mainly concerned with the establishment of men's rights and obligations. These terms are strictly correlative. Every right brings an obligation with it; and that not merely in the obvious sense that when one man has a right other men are under an obligation to respect it, but also in the more subtle sense that when a man has a right he is thereby laid under an obligation to employ it for the general good. This fact is concealed from many men's minds through a certain confusion between legal and moral obligation. It is generally convenient to enforce the observance of rights by positive laws; whereas it is not generally convenient to enforce the corresponding obligation. Hence it comes to be thought that there is no obligation at all. For instance, it is convenient to protect property; whereas it would be very troublesome and dangerous to try to compel men to use their property wisely—and indeed any such attempt, beyond certain narrow limits, is almost bound to defeat its own ends. Hence it comes to be said that a man "may do what he likes with his own." *Legally*, he may; but *morally*, he is under the obligation to use his own for the general good, just as strictly as if it were another's. A man's rights, in fact, are nothing more than those things which, for the sake of the general good, it is convenient that he should be allowed to possess. And since it is for the sake of the general good that he possesses them, he is bound to use them for that end. By himself, a man has no right to anything whatever. He is a part of a social whole; and he has a right only to that which it is for the good of the whole that he should have. Let us consider very briefly the nature of some of the more important of these rights.

§ 5. THE RIGHTS OF MAN. (*a*) *Life.*—The first of human

rights is the right to live. This right follows at once from the fact that the moral end is a personal one—a form of self-realization. If the end which men sought were some impersonal object, life might reasonably be sacrificed to that. And, indeed, as the self to be realized is the social self, the individual will sometimes be justified in sacrificing his life for the sake of his society. But such cases are exceptional. As a rule, the human good requires the continuance of life for its realization. Hence it is important that the sacredness of life should be recognized. In some primitive forms of society even this fundamental right is not acknowledged. Children are frequently exposed, and captives in war are put to death without hesitation. And even in partly civilized communities the sacredness of life is sometimes very lightly treated—*e.g.* where the practice of duelling is permitted. Indeed if the value of life were fully appreciated, there can be little doubt that even war would soon be abolished among civilized nations. Also it must be observed that the right of life cannot be said to be really secured to all the citizens of a community unless the means of obtaining a livelihood are secured. The right to live thus seems to involve the right to labour.[1]

The right of life, like all rights, brings an obligation with it—*viz.* the obligation of treating life, both one's own and that of others, as a sacred thing. He who violates this obligation—*e.g.* by murder—forfeits the right of life, and may legitimately be deprived of it.

(*b*) *Freedom.*—The next right is that of freedom. The necessity of this rests mainly on the fact that the moral ideal has to be realized by the individual will. Hence the

[1] This point was emphasized by Louis Blanc and some other socialistic writers. The question how far, and by what means, such a right is to be secured, must be left to writers on Politics and Economics.

individual, in order to realize his supreme end, must be free to exercise his will. The recognition of this right usually comes much later than that of life.[1] Slavery existed long after the stage at which prisoners of war were put to death; and even now, after the abolition of slavery, the conditions of contract with regard to labour and to property are often of such a kind as seriously to interfere with men's liberty in the conduct of their lives. Of course freedom in any absolute sense is not possible, and ought not to be aimed at. It can never be permissible in any well-ordered community that its members should do as they please. The right which it is desirable to secure is the right of having the free development of one's life as little interfered with as is possible, consistently with the maintenance of social order.

The right of freedom brings with it the obligation of using one's freedom for the attainment of rational ends. Milton rightly said of liberty, "who love that must first be wise and good."[2] It is only on this assumption that liberty can be granted in a well-ordered state. Hence the slowness in the acquisition of freedom is not without justi-

[1] Hegel remarked (*Philosophy of History*, Introduction) that the Oriental nations recognized only that *one* is free—*i.e.* the Despot: the Greeks, on the other hand, recognized that *some* are free—*viz.* the Greek citizens themselves—while Barbarians were thought to be naturally fitted for slavery: while it has been reserved for modern times, under the influence of Christianity, to demand that *all* shall be free. This demand has been especially prominent since the time of the Reformation. Sometimes it is even pushed to an extreme—*e.g.* by Rousseau and by the Economists of the *laissez faire* school. For extreme views in recent times, see *A Plea for Liberty* and Spencer's *The Man* versus *the State;* and for a criticism of these views, see Ritchie's *Principles of State Interference.*

[2] *Cf.* also what Milton says on this point in his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, § 1: "None can love freedom heartily, but good men: the rest love not freedom, but licence; which never hath more scope or more indulgence than under tyrants."

fication. Freedom is not a commodity that can be bought or given: it must be earned.

(*c*) *Property.*—The right of property may almost be regarded as part of the right of freedom. Nearly all the ends at which a man can aim require instruments; and if a man has not the right to use these instruments, his liberty of pursuing the ends is practically rendered void. Since, however, instruments—especially such instruments as the soil of a country—are limited in amount, it becomes a difficult question to decide how the use of them is to be apportioned among the members of a community. If their use is reserved for a few, the great majority of the citizens are to a certain extent deprived of their liberty. The discussion of this question, however, must be left to writers on Politics. From a purely ethical point of view, we can only insist on the importance of the right of property, as a means of securing the possibility of a free development of life.

The right of property involves the obligation to use it wisely for the general good. In communities where the fulfilment of this obligation cannot in the main be relied on, the right of property cannot be granted. In primitive communities there is practically no such right. Everything is possessed in common. It is only as men become civilized and educated that they begin to be capable of being entrusted with property; and even then it is usually necessary that the right should be carefully guarded against misuse.[1] Some writers (*e.g.* Plato) have thought that in

[1] Strictly speaking, from a purely ethical point of view, it may be said that a man has no right to any kind of property except that which he has made an essential part of his own being. Hence a German writer, G. Simmel, says pointedly, "Ich habe wirklich nur das was ich bin" ("Strictly speaking I possess nothing but what I am") (*Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, p. 172). But of course it would

an ideal state there ought to be a community of goods, and no right of private property.[1] But this appears to be a mistake. Aristotle was probably right in thinking[2] rather that in an ideal state every one should have the free use of the necessary instruments,[3] but should be taught to use them for the common good.

(*d*) *Contract.*—Another important right is the right to the fulfilment of contracts. If one man engages to render certain services to another, the second has the right to receive these services. In primitive societies there is scarcely any such thing as contract. The relations of men to one another are fixed almost from their birth, and are altered only by force.[4] Hence it has been said[5] that societies develop "from status to contract."

The right of contract involves the obligation to enter into no contracts except those that can be reasonably fulfilled. A man is not at liberty, for instance, to contract

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be impossible to observe this principle in practical politics. This does not, however, make it any the less important to take account of it.

[1] See his *Republic*, Books IV. and V. The precise extent to which Plato intended to carry out the principle of community is not altogether clear. For a recent advocacy of communism, see Morris's *News from Nowhere.*

[2] *Politics*, II. v.

[3] Whether land, and other forms of property that are not capable of being indefinitely multiplied, can be dealt with on the same principle, is a much more difficult question.

[4] On the other hand, in modern times, contract has become so common a method of entering into relationship, that some writers have been tempted to think that all relationships are founded on such engagements. The State, for instance, was said to rest on a "social contract." Hobbes and Rousseau were the chief upholders of this view. An eloquent attack was made on it by Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France.* See Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 165, *note.* There is a good criticism in Hume's *Essays* ("Of the Original Contract").

[5] Maine's *Ancient Law*, chap. v.

himself into slavery.[1] Nor is any one entitled, even if he were able, to enter into such a contract as that of Faust with Mephistopheles. Hence the right of contract, like that of property, is possible only in a highly-developed community, and even then requires considerable safeguards.[2]

(*e*) *Education.*—The last right which it seems necessary to notice here, is the right of education. In this case the right and obligation are so closely united that it is scarcely possible to distinguish them. Every one, we may say, has both the right and the obligation of being educated according to his capacity; since education is necessary for the realization of the rational self. This is a right which has been but tardily recognized even in some highly-civilized countries; and even now in many of them the highest kinds of education are practically inaccessible to the mass of the people. But it is clear that in a well-ordered state every one ought to have the means of developing his faculties to the best advantage.

§ 6. ULTIMATE MEANING OF RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS. A little reflection may convince us that the ultimate significance of rights and obligations is simply this. We have a right to the means that are necessary for the development of our lives in the direction that is best for the highest good of the community of which we are members; and we are under the obligation to use the means in the best way for the attainment of this end.[3]

[1] Hence the fallacy of Carlyle's view, that slavery consists simply in hiring a man's services for life. See his *Latter-Day Pamphlets.* A man has no right to contract away his own freedom.

[2] Men who are in a disadvantageous position (owing to poverty, for instance) are apt to be induced to form contracts on unfair conditions. It is desirable that they should be, as far as possible, guarded against this.

[3] Of course I refer here to rights and obligations in the ethical sense. To what extent, and by what means, these rights and obligations are

§ 7. Social Institutions.—There are various ways in which men group themselves together in a society; and the relations in which they are thus brought to one another are often of so much ethical significance that it is desirable to notice briefly some of the more important of them.

(*a*) *The Family.*—The family is based on natural affection. Its chief objects are to provide adequate protection and care for the helplessness of childhood, and at the same time to provide an adequate sphere for the highest forms of friendship and love. It is thought that as a rule the former object can be better secured by the affection of the parents than it could be by any state arrangements;[1] and that the latter object is best fulfilled within a narrow circle.[2] The control of parents, however, requires to be in many ways limited. Thus it seems necessary to enforce the proper education of children, and to prevent them from being employed in unsuitable work at too early an age. The relation of husband and wife in the family is properly one of equality; but where this is not secured by mutual affection, it seems impossible for any state regulations to prevent the subordination of one to the other, without an intolerable interference with individual liberty. This is, therefore, a matter on which it is important to develop a

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to be acknowledged and enforced in actual states, are questions for the political philosopher. On these subjects reference may be made to Sidgwick's *Elements of Politics*, especially chaps. iii.—vi., and chap. x.

[1] Plato, however, thought otherwise. See his *Republic*, Book V.

[2] Among the Greeks, in the classical age, the highest forms of friendship were practically always between men. The low position of women prevented them from sharing in the higher life of the citizen. Greek views of the family life are almost entirely vitiated by this fact; just as their views of industrial life are vitiated by their acceptance of slavery, and by their contempt for all forms of manual labour except agriculture. On the Family, see Rickaby's *Moral Philosophy*, Part II., chap. vi., and Devas's *Studies of Family Life*.

strong public opinion. A good deal, however, can be done by law in removing disabilities which stand in the way of the recognition of perfect equality.[1]

(*b*) *The Workshop.*—Industrial relations are strongly contrasted with those of the family. They are not based on mutual affection but on contract; and they are not relations of equality but of subordination. No doubt, in the family also there is the subordination of children to their parents; but this is the subordination of the undeveloped to the developed, of the helpless to their natural protectors: whereas in the industrial life the subordination which exists is not with a view to the protection or development of those who are subordinated, but simply with a view to external ends. In these circumstances it is important to make such regulations as will secure fairness of contract, and prevent subordination from becoming slavery. It has sometimes been made a matter of regret that, as civilization advances, the relations of men in industrial life depart more and more from the type of the family. Formerly the relation between master and apprentice was almost of a paternal character; whereas now, as Carlyle used to say,[2] there is nothing but the "cash *nexus*." But it is doubtful whether this ought to be made a matter for regret. A paternal relationship easily passes into tyranny when there is no basis of natural affection. It is probably best that business relationships should be made a matter of

[1] Mr. Leslie Stephen has objected (*Science of Ethics*, chap. iii., §§ 36—39) to the common practice of classing the family along with other forms of social organization, on the ground that it rests on physiological necessities, and that it is rather a basis than a result of political unity. For a student of sociology or politics this contention would, I think, have much force. The ethical significance of the family, however, does not appear to me to be affected by it.

[2] See his *Past and Present;* and *cf.* below, pp. 222, 278.

pure contract. This may to some slight extent interfere with the development of relations of mutual kindness and loyalty; but there can be little doubt that to a much greater extent it helps to prevent injustice. The feelings of kindness are more likely to arise in men as neighbours and fellow-citizens than as masters and servants; and the practical offices of help can probably be better undertaken by society as a whole than by particular employers.

At the same time it cannot be doubted that anything that can be done to make the relation of subordination less harsh is in the highest degree desirable. For this reason all forms of co-operation that are practicable ought to be earnestly promoted. The question, What kinds of industry ought to be encouraged or discouraged? is also largely an ethical question; though the methods by which industries may advantageously be promoted or impeded, must be left to be discussed by economists and political philosophers. Under modern conditions of industrial life, industries are promoted or retarded chiefly[1] by changes in the demand for the objects produced by them; and these again are brought about mainly by changes in men's tastes, fashions, and habits of life. Now in so far as the objects brought into demand by such changes are necessary for the preservation or maintenance or advancement of human life, and in so far as the industries by which they are produced are not injurious to human life, there can be no question about their moral justification. The ethical question, therefore, arises chiefly with regard to the use of what are called

[1] Setting aside changes in natural conditions, and changes produced by new discoveries and inventions, with which Ethics is only very indirectly concerned (since the question, how far men should be allowed to make and utilize new discoveries, can scarcely at the present time be regarded as a practical one).

luxuries, and to the use of objects which can be produced only by means of dangerous or deleterious processes. And the question which thus arises can be answered only by balancing the advantages which such objects bring towards the advancement of the supreme end of life against the loss occasioned by their injurious effects.[1]

(*c*) *The Civic Community.*—If men's business relations are to be purely a matter of contract, it is necessary that the community as a whole should undertake those more paternal functions which cannot conveniently be left to the care of individuals. This is partly the business of the central government; but to a great extent it can be more conveniently managed by each district for itself. The care which has to be exercised over the citizens consists in such matters as the provision of sanitary arrangements (including baths, and the like), the means of education (including well-furnished public libraries), the enforcement of precautions against accidents, the prevention of adulteration of foods and other forms of deception, and the securing of the means of livelihood to those who are incapacitated for labour. The discussion of the details of such provisions, and of the question whether they can be best managed by a central authority or by local administrations, must be left to writers on Politics.

(*d*) *The Church.*—The paternal care of the citizens, how ever, cannot be fully provided by any form of civic machinery. There must always be a certain hardness in all such machinery. It must be managed on a basis of law and not of affection. Hence it is necessary that it

[1] The best discussion of this subject known to me is to be found in a pamphlet on *The Effects of Consumption of Wealth on Distribution*, by Mr. William Smart (published by the American Academy of Political and Social Science).

should be supplemented by more personal relations among the citizens. A centre for such personal relationships is furnished by the Church, whose function it is to secure the carrying out of the highest moral ideal in human relationships. It is greatly to be regretted that differences of religious opinion prevent the Church from being so efficient in this way as it might otherwise be. There can be little doubt that in the Middle Ages, under the sway of Catholicism, its work was more efficiently done—if it is in reality possible to compare the action of institutions under very different conditions of social life. Perhaps it may be found necessary to supplement the work of the Churches by unsectarian ethical institutions. But the discussion of this question would not be suitable for an elementary text-book[1]; and indeed it could scarcely be satisfactorily answered without introducing considerations that are not of a purely ethical character. The same remark applies to the discussion of the important question of the right relation of the Churches to the State.

(*e*) *The State.*—The State is the supreme controller of all social relationships. It makes laws and sees that they are enforced. It also carries on various kinds of work that cannot conveniently be left to private enterprise. It undertakes, for instance, the provision of the means of national defence, the conveyance of letters, and in some countries the conducting of railways. The extent to which it is desirable that such work should be undertaken by the State, cannot be discussed in an ethical treatise. But it is important to insist that any one who seeks to answer this question, must answer it by a consideration of the degree

[1] It is, however, discussed at considerable length by Prof. Giżycki in his *Introduction to the Study of Ethics* (Dr. Coit's adaptation), chap. ix.

to which such action tends to promote the highest life of the citizens of the State.

§ **8**. SOCIAL PROGRESS.—All the institutions to which reference has now been made, are continually undergoing changes, which are rendered necessary by the progressive civilization of mankind. In carrying out such changes it is important to see that they are not made with a view to merely temporary advantages, and that the advantages which they secure are not bought with any loss of human efficiency. The ultimate standard by which all progress must be tested is the realization of the rational self. Material and social progress is valuable only in so far as it is a means to this.

§ **9**. INDIVIDUALISM AND SOCIALISM.—In recent times discussions with regard to social progress have appeared chiefly in the form of the question, whether we ought to move in an individualistic or in a socialistic direction. Individualists think that it is chiefly important to secure, as far as possible, the freedom of action of the individual citizens. Socialists, on the other hand, think that what is chiefly desirable is to regulate the actions of individuals so as to secure the good of all. It does not appear, however, that there is any real opposition between the principles of Individualism and of Socialism.[1] The good of all can certainly not be secured if the nature of each is cramped and underfed; nor can freedom be allowed to each except on the assumption that that freedom will on the whole be used for the good of all. The question that ought to be asked is—In what directions

[1] From the point of view of Ethics, we may say that both Individualism and Socialism supply us with economic commandments. The commandment of Individualism is—Thou shalt not pauperize; or Every one must be allowed to work out his own salvation. The commandment of Socialism is—Thou shalt not exploit; or No one must be used as a mere means to any one else's salvation.

is it desirable to give men more freedom, and in what directions is it desirable that their actions should be more controlled? It is a question of detail, and it must be answered differently at different stages of human development. Perhaps at the present time it is chiefly in the socialistic direction that advance is demanded. But the reason is simply that in recent generations the individualistic side has been too strongly insisted on. This again is mainly due to the fact that in recent times the main social advance has consisted in the emancipation of highly-skilled labour from cumbersome restraints. The problem of the next age is rather that of providing a truly human life for those who are less skilled and capable, and who are consequently less able to look after their own interests. The former advance could be made by individualistic methods: the latter seems to demand a certain degree of Socialism.[1]

[1] This subject is treated with considerable fulness by Prof. Paulsen in his *System der Ethik*, vol. ii., Book IV. iii. 3. See also an excellent paper by Prof. Adams on "An Interpretation of the Social Movements of our Time" in the *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. ii., No. 1 (October, 1891), pp. 32—50. On the general subject of Socialism as a question of practical politics, the student may consult Sidgwick's *Principles of Political Economy*, Book III., chaps. ii.—vii., and *Elements of Politics*, chap. x. See also his *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., chap. v. Reference may also be made to the *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, Schäffle's *Quintessence of Socialism*, Kirkup's *Inquiry into Socialism*, Rae's *Contemporary Socialism*, Graham's *Socialism New and Old*, Rickaby's *Moral Philosophy*, Gilman's *Socialism and the American Spirit*, &c. A singularly searching examination of the ideas underlying Individualism and Socialism has lately appeared in Mr. Bosanquet's *Civilization of Christendom*.

NOTE ON JUSTICE.

Anything like a complete discussion of the difficult conception of Justice would evidently be quite beyond the scope of such a text-book as this. But a few remarks seem to be called for.

Much confusion has arisen in the treatment of this subject from a failure to observe an ambiguity in the term which was well known even to Plato and Aristotle, but which some modern writers seem to have forgotten. The term "Justice" is used in two distinct senses. We speak of a "just man," and we speak of a "just law" or a "just government." Just, in the former sense, means almost the same as morally good: it means morally good in respect to the fulfilment of social obligations. Justice, then, in this sense is equivalent to all virtue in its social aspect.[1] On the other hand, when we speak of a just law or a just government, we mean one that is fair or impartial[2] in dealing with those to whom it applies or over whom it rules.[3] This ambiguity in the use of the term is partly concealed by the fact that we sometimes speak of a man as being just in the same sense as that in which the term is applied to a law or government—*viz.* in those cases in which a man occupies a position of authority (as a judge, a king, or even a parent), so as to be a representative of law or government. Hence many writers have failed to perceive that there are two senses in which the term is used. The confusion between these two senses vitiates, for example, nearly all that is said about Justice in the fifth chapter of Mill's *Utilitarianism*. That Mill should have fallen into such a confusion is, indeed, not surprising. Confusions are so plentiful in his writings that one begins

[1] See Aristotle's *Ethics*, Book V., chap. i. Sometimes, however, when we speak of a "just man" we mean merely one who fulfils those obligations that are enforced by positive law. *Cf.* above, p. 175, note 2, and below, p. 204, note 1. But I do not think that this use of the term is common, or to be commended.

[2] *Ibid.*, chap. ii.

[3] Justice is derived from the Latin *jus*, law. This again is cognate with *jussum*, meaning what is *ordered*. A just man means one who obeys orders, *i. e.* the moral orders or laws. A just law or government, on the other hand, means one that possesses the qualities that belong to, or ought to belong to, a law (*jus*)—*viz.* in particular, the quality of fairness or impartiality.

almost to be surprised when he fails to fall into one.[1] The influence of the same ambiguity seems, however, to be not without effect even on a writer who in this respect is the very opposite of Mill. Dr. Sidgwick carefully distinguishes[2] between the two senses of Justice now referred to, and states that he intends to confine himself to the second. Nevertheless, one of his illustrations appears to refer to Justice rather in the first sense. He remarks[3] that we cannot say, "in treating of the private conduct of individuals, that *all* arbitrary inequality is recognized as unjust: it would not be commonly thought unjust in a rich bachelor with no near relatives to leave the bulk of his property in providing pensions exclusively for indigent red-haired men, however unreasonable and capricious the choice might appear." When it is said that this is not unjust, does not this mean simply that it is not contrary to any recognized moral obligation? And is not the term, therefore, used in its first sense? If a law, or a government, or even a parent in dealing with his children, were to exhibit any similar caprice to that here supposed by Dr. Sidgwick, would not this be at once regarded as unjust? In such a case, we should be using the term in its second sense. The person supposed by Dr. Sidgwick is not said to be unjust, apparently simply for the reason that he is not in a position in which Justice, in this sense, can be predicated of him at all. A man cannot, in this sense, be either just or unjust, unless he represents some form of law or government.

But there is a still further ambiguity in the use of the term. And this also was pointed out by Aristotle.[4] In speaking of Justice in the sense of fairness, we may be referring either to the apportionment of goods or to the apportionment of evils. Now evil can be fairly apportioned only to those who have done evil—*i. e.* as punishment. Justice, then, may be either distributive or corrective. But sometimes the term is

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[1] Mill's wonderful breadth and fairness are accompanied by a want of logical precision (due probably to haste), which is almost equally remarkable in so able a man. This fact was brought out by Jevons in a very ill-natured but at the same time forcible paper, which has been published in the volume entitled *Pure Logic*, edited by Prof. Adamson. Perhaps, however, the truth is partly that Mill's unusual clearness of statement makes his errors more obvious than those of most other men.

[2] *Methods of Ethics*, p. 264-5, *note* 2.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 268-9, *note*.

[4] *Op. cit.*, Book V., chap. ii.

used emphatically in the latter sense as if this were its exclusive use. To "do justice" is frequently understood as meaning simply to award punishment. Thus, there is an ambiguity between the broader sense of the term, including distributive and corrective Justice, and the narrower sense in which it is confined to the latter. Mill seems to have been misled by this ambiguity also. Thus, when he says that "the two essential ingredients in the sentiment of Justice are, the desire to punish a person who has done harm, and the knowledge or belief that there is some definite individual or individuals to whom harm has been done," he seems to be referring exclusively to corrective Justice, without being aware that he is dealing only with a part of the subject.

As far as I can judge, Aristotle's treatment of the whole subject of Justice is still the best that we have. Next to this comes probably the treatment by Dr. Sidgwick ; and it of course has the advantage of being more fully adapted to modern conditions of knowledge and practice.

CHAPTER XI.

THE COMMANDMENTS.

"Τὰ καθήκοντα ὡς ἐπίπαν ταῖς σχέσεσιν παραμετρεῖται."[1]

EPICTETUS.

§ 1. NATURE OF MORAL LAWS.—The Jews, by whom the moral consciousness of the modern world has been perhaps mainly determined,[2] summed up their view of duty in the form of ten commandments. And we find in other nations also a certain more or less explicit recognition of definite rules to which a good man must adhere—rules which say expressly, Do this, Abstain from that.[3] Now, in the moral

[1] ("Our duties are in general proportioned to our conditions.")

[2] It is hard to say whether the Jews or the Greeks have had most influence on us in this respect. See Hatch's *Hibbert Lectures*; and *cf.*, for a vigorous but very paradoxical view of the same subject, Dühring's *Ersatz der Religion.*

[3] The Greeks had no definite code of moral rules. Their earliest moral wisdom was expressed rather in brief proverbial sayings, such as μηδὲν ἄγαν ("nothing to excess"). Among the Greeks, however, as among all early peoples, the laws of the State furnished a basis for moral obligation, just as a child's first ideas of duty are derived from the commands of its parents. The dawning of the consciousness that there is a deeper basis of moral obligation than State laws is illustrated in the *Antigone* of Sophocles. It was largely because the early Greeks had no clear distinction between the moral law and the laws of the State that the criticisms of the Sophists (and to some extent of Socrates) were felt to be subversive of morality. See Zeller's *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, vol. ii., p. 404, and *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, pp.

"ought," as we have so far considered it, there are no such explicit commands contained. There is only the general command to realize the rational self. We must now consider what is the place of particular rules within this general commandment.

What has been said in the last chapter may help us to do this. For we have seen there that there are certain definite rights that come to be gradually recognized in human societies; and that these definite rights bring definite obligations along with them. Such obligations may be expressed in the form of commandments.

It is not merely, however, in connection with these recognized rights that such obligations arise. Obligations arise in connection with all the institutions of social life, and in connection with all the relationships into which men are brought to one another. No doubt there is a certain right corresponding to all such obligations, just as there is an obligation corresponding to every right.[1] But sometimes it is the right that is obvious, and the obligation seems to follow it, whereas in other cases it is the obligation that is more easily recognized. In the preceding chapter we have considered some of the more prominent rights and institu-

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219—221. It is noteworthy also that the absoluteness of the Jewish Law showed signs of breaking down, as soon as the Jews had lost their national independence.

[1] Rights are also for the most part connected with definite institutions, or forms of social organization. Hence duties also tend to cluster round them. Thus, Mr. Alexander says (*Moral Order and Progress*, p. 253) that "Duties are the conduct . . . by which institutions are maintained": "the duty of recording a vote . . . gives effect to the institution of parliamentary franchise." It seems an exaggeration, however, to say that all duties are related to institutions in this way. The duty of regard for life, for instance, seems to be independent of any special institutions—unless we are to describe life itself as an "institution," which would be somewhat paradoxical.

tions of social life. In this chapter we are to consider the more prominent obligations as presenting themselves in the form of commandments. In the one case, as in the other, it would probably be useless to attempt to give an exhaustive classification.

§ 2. Respect for Life.—The first commandment is the commandment to respect life, corresponding directly to the right of life. This commandment is expressed in the form, Thou shalt not kill; and its meaning is so obvious that it requires little comment. We must merely observe that the commandment which bids us have respect for life enjoins much more than the mere passive abstinence from the destruction of another's physical existence. It involves also the care of our own, and the avoidance of anything likely to injure either our own or another's physical well-being. How much this implies, we are only gradually learning. Mr. Herbert Spencer has done admirable service in emphasizing this side of moral law.[1]

§ 3. Respect for Freedom.—The second commandment corresponds to the right of Freedom. It forbids any interference with the development of another man's life, except in so far as such interference may be required to help on that development itself. It may be expressed in the form, Treat every human being as a person, never as a mere thing. In this form, it may be regarded as forbidding slavery, despotism, exploitation, prostitution, and every other form of the use of another as a mere means to one's own ends. This commandment and the preceding one are closely connected together. They might, in fact, be regarded

[1] See especially his *Data of Ethics*, chap. xi., and *The Principles of Ethics*, Part III. *Cf.* also Clark Murray's *Introduction to Ethics*, Book II., Part II., chap. ii., and Adler's *Moral Instruction of Children*, Lecture XII.

as one; for the destruction of the life of another is simply an extreme form of interference with his free development. There is also a third commandment which is closely connected with these two, and which we may notice next.

§ 4. RESPECT FOR CHARACTER.—This may be stated as the commandment to respect character. It is the positive of which the two preceding are the negative. It not merely forbids us to injure our neighbour or to do anything that will interfere with his free development, but also positively bids us observe, as far as we can, what will further him. It was of this commandment that St. Paul was thinking when he said, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient." By the ordinary negative law he was permitted to do anything that did not positively injure another; but he was conscious that, in addition to this, he ought to abstain from anything that wou'd tend to prevent the furtherance of another in his development. To partake of certain meats would not interfere either with the life or with the freedom of any one; but, having regard to the stage of development at which they stand, we may be aware that it would be injurious to them. Of course, we might regard this principle as simply an extension of the negative principle of respect for freedom. But perhaps it is better to regard it as positive; for when we thus have regard for the stage of development at which any one stands, we shall be led not merely to abstain from that which will injure him, but also to do that which will help him. The simplest way of summing up this commandment is perhaps to say, in Hegel's[1] language, "Be a person, and respect others as persons."

§ 5. RESPECT FOR PROPERTY.—The next commandment is, Thou shalt not steal. This is simply a carrying out of the preceding. It forbids any appropriation of the instru-

[1] *Philosophie des Rechts*, § 36.

ments of another's well-being, whether they be material things that belong to him, or such goods as time, reputation, and the like. This commandment is, as I say, involved in the preceding. For the development of a man's personality involves the use of instruments; and the right of an individual to appropriate these involves the obligation on the part of all others of leaving his possession of them inviolate. The commandment to respect property ought, however, to be regarded as involving something more than the mere condemnation of theft. It involves regard for our own property as well as that of others. It condemns, therefore, any neglect or abuse of the instruments which an individual has appropriated. It may also be regarded as condemning all forms of idleness that imply living on the work of others, and so appropriating what belongs to them.

§ **6**. Respect for Social Order.—To avoid unnecessary details, we may next consider what is rather a group of commandments than a single rule—*viz.* those commandments that are connected with respect for social institutions and the various forms of social order. Such respect is pretty nearly equivalent to what the Greeks used to call *αἰδώς*, shame or reverence.[1] This feeling forbids us to interfere unnecessarily with any established institution. It forbids, for instance, any violation of the sanctities of the family; it enjoins that we should "honour the king" and all constituted authorities;[2] and the like. The authority of this

[1] It has already been remarked (p. 165, *note* 2) that *αἰδώς* is almost equivalent to conscience. Since, however, the moral obligations of the early Greeks were connected entirely with social laws and institutions, it was almost entirely with these that the feeling of *αἰδώς* was associated.

[2] I need hardly say that this rule is not to be understood as excluding the right of revolution. As we shall shortly see, none of these rules is to be regarded as absolutely binding. Just as a Nelson may look at the signals of his superior officer with his blind eye, so a far-seeing

group of commandments rests on the importance of maintaining the social system to which we belong. The soldier feels himself in general bound to carry out the commands of his superior, even if he knows very well that "some one has blundered"; and in the same way the citizen feels bound in general to give his support to the constituted authorities of his state, even if he sees clearly that their laws are not altogether wise. Evidently this group of commandments might be split up into a number of separate rules. But it is so easy to do this, that it is scarcely worth while to attempt it here.

§ 7. RESPECT FOR TRUTH.—The next commandment is, Thou shalt not lie. This rule has a double application. On the one hand, it may be taken to mean that we should conform our actions to our words—that, for instance, we should fulfil our promises, and observe the contracts into which we have entered. On the other hand, it may be taken to mean that we should conform our words to our thoughts—*i. e.* that we should say what we mean. Evidently, these two interpretations are quite different. A man may make a promise which he does not mean to keep. In that case, he lies in the second sense. But it does not follow that he will necessarily lie in the first sense. For, having made the promise, he may keep it. Still, both senses are concerned with respect for the utterance of our thoughts—though the latter is concerned with care in the utterance of them, the former with care in conforming our actions to that which has been uttered. Lying, however, ought not to be understood as referring merely to language. We lie by our actions, if we do things in such a way as to imply that we intend to do something else, or that we have done something else,

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social reformer may defy the laws of his state. But it is only in exceptional circumstances that such conduct is justifiable.

which in fact we neither have done nor intend to do. The commandment, then, Thou shalt not lie, may be taken to mean that we must always so speak and act as to express as clearly as possible what we believe to be true, or what we intend to perform; and that, having expressed our meaning, we must as far as possible conform our actions to it.

§ 8. Respect for Progress.—The last commandment of which it seems necessary to take notice, is the commandment—too often overlooked in moral codes—which bids us help on, as far as we can, the advancement of the world. It may be expressed in this form, Thou shalt labour, within thy particular province, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind.[1] It is not without reason that I express this commandment in the same form as that in which the love of God has been enjoined. It was wisely said, *Laborare est orare*, Work is Worship. The love of God is perhaps most clearly shown by faith in human progress; and faith in it is shown most clearly by devotion to it.[2] With this great positive commandment, we may conclude our list.

§ 9. Casuistry.—I have made no great effort to reduce these commandments to system. It might be a good exercise for the student to work them out more in detail, and show their relations to one another. But it seems clear that no system of commandments can ever be made quite satisfactory. There can be but one supreme law; and if we make any subordinate rules absolute, they are sure to come into conflict. Such a conflict of rules gives rise to

[1] This is Carlyle's commandment—"Know what thou canst work at; and work at it, like a Hercules" (*Past and Present*, Book III., chap. xi.).

[2] "All true work is religion" (Carlyle, *ibid.*, chap. xii.).

casuistry. Casuistry consists in the effort to interpret the precise meaning of the commandments, and to explain which is to give way when a conflict arises.[1] It is evident enough that conflicts must arise. If we are always to respect life, we must sometimes appropriate property—*e.g.* the knife of a man about to commit murder. If we are always to do our utmost for freedom, we shall sometimes come into conflict with order. So in other cases. We have already quoted the emphatic utterance of Jacobi on this point;[2] and though it may be somewhat exaggerated, yet it cannot be denied that there are occasions in which we feel bound to break one or more of the commandments in obedience to a higher law. Now casuistry seeks to draw out rules for breaking the rules—to show the exact circumstances in which we are entitled to violate particular commandments. This effort is chiefly associated historically with the teaching of the Jesuits.[3] It was called "casuistry" because it dealt with "cases of conscience." It fell into disrepute, and was severely attacked by Pascal. And on the whole rightly. It is bad enough that we should require particular rules of conduct at all;[4] but rules for the breaking of rules would be quite intolerable. They would become so complicated that it would be impossible to follow them out; and any such attempt would almost inevitably lead in practice to a system by which men might justify, to their own satisfaction,

[1] See Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 88, Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 67-8, Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii., pp. 186—190, and p. 215, and Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, p. 142.

[2] See above, pp. 63-4.

[3] See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 151—154.

[4] The expression of the moral law in the form of particular rules belongs to an early stage in moral development. It naturally comes immediately after that stage in which morality is identified with the laws of the State. *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 66—70.

any action whatever.[1] The way to escape from the limitations of the commandments, is not to make other commandments more minute and subtle, but rather to fall back upon the great fundamental law, of which the particular commandments are but fragmentary aspects.

§ **10.** The Supreme Law.—What is that fundamental law? It is, as we have already seen, the commandment that bids us realize the rational self. This commandment is so broad, and is apt to seem so vague, that it is certainly well that it should be supplemented, for practical purposes, by more particular rules of conduct. But when these rules come into conflict, and when we feel ourselves in a difficulty with regard to the course that we ought to pursue—when, in short, a "case of conscience" arises—we must fall back upon the supreme commandment, and ask ourselves: Is the course that we think of pursuing the one that is most conducive to the realization of the rule of reason in the world? No doubt this is a question which it will often be difficult to answer.[2] But, in general, a man who keeps his

[1] Hence Adam Smith says (*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part VI., sect. IV.) that "books of casuistry are generally as useless as they are commonly tiresome."

[2] Sometimes it may be easier to answer in the form of feeling. The commandments in which the Jewish Law was summed up—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c., and thy neighbour as thyself"—express the right attitude of feeling, that of love for the supreme reason and for all rational beings. In the form of feeling, however, there is the disadvantage that the definite duties to be performed are not suggested, whereas the command to pursue the advancement of the rational life suggests at once the means that must be adopted for this end. At the same time, it is important to insist that the right attitude of mind necessarily brings with it the right form of feeling. To this point we have already referred (above, pp. 64, 70, 84, and 85). We have seen that Kant refused to regard love as a duty, interpreting the Christian injunction as meaning merely that we should treat others *as if* we loved them. But, as Adam Smith remarked (*Theory of Moral

conscience unclouded, and sets this question fairly before himself, will be able to keep himself practically clear from errors, without resorting to casuistical distinctions.[1]

§ **11.** CONVENTIONAL RULES.—Besides the commandments, or strict moral laws, we find in every community a number of subordinate rules of conduct, inferior in authority, but often superior in the obedience which they elicit. Such are, for instance, the rules of courtesy, those rules that belong to the "Code of Honour," the etiquette of particular trades and particular classes of society.[2] There is often a certain absurdity in these rules; and some of them are frequently laughed at under the name of "Mrs. Grundy." Certainly a superstitious devotion to them, a devotion which interferes with the fulfilment of more important duties or with the development of independence of character, is not to be commended. Yet sometimes such rules are not without reason. Schiller tells us, in a wise passage of his *Wallenstein*,[3] that we ought not to despise the narrow conventional laws; for they were often invented as a safeguard against various forms of wrong and injustice. *Pectus sibi permissum* is not less to be distrusted than *intellectus sibi permissus;* and it is often well that the impulses of a man's own heart

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Sentiments, Part III., sect. III., chap. iv.), this could scarcely be described as loving our neighbour as ourselves; since "we love ourselves surely for our own sakes, and not merely because we are commanded to do so." On the same point, Janet has well quoted (*Theory of Morals*, p. 354) the emphatic utterance of St. Paul, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

[1] See, on this point, Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book IV., chap. ii.

[2] Sometimes referred to as "minor morals."

[3] *Die Piccolomini*, Act I., scene iv.—

"Lass uns die alten engen Ordnungen
Gering nicht achten!"

should be checked by certain generally understood conventions.[1] The law of respect for social order, at any rate, will generally lead a man to follow the established custom, when no more important principle is thereby violated. Still, this is not a matter of supreme importance. A scrupulous adhesion to petty rules is no doubt as foolish as a total neglect of them. Eccentricity has its place in the moral life; and there are certainly many customs which are "more honoured in the breach than the observance."

§ 12. Duties of Perfect and Imperfect Obligation. The impossibility of drawing out any absolute code of duties has led some writers to draw a distinction between that part of our obligations which can be definitely codified and that part which must be left comparatively vague. This distinction has taken various forms. Sometimes those obligations which are capable of precise definition are called duties; while that part of good conduct which cannot be so definitely formulated is classed under the head of virtue—as if the virtuous man were one who did more than his duty, more than could reasonably be demanded of him.[2] Again,

[1] Indeed, such rules are often more useful in small matters than in great; just because the small matters interest us less. *Cf.* below, p. 207, *note* 1.

[2] There can be no doubt that this is a common use of the term "Virtue" in ordinary language. Perhaps it is even the original sense of the word. It certainly seems to have been at first applied to those qualities that appeared most eminent and praiseworthy. See Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*, p. 243: "The distinctive mark of virtue seems to lie in what is beyond duty: yet every such act must depend on the peculiar circumstances under which it is done, of which we leave the agent to be the judge, and we certainly think it his duty to do what is best." *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 177, *note*. See also Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part I., sect. II., chap. iv., Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., chap. ii., Rickaby's *Moral Philosophy*, p. 70, and below, pp. 205 and 211.

Mill[1] classifies strict duties under the head of Justice; and adds that "there are other things, on the contrary, which we wish that people should do, which we like or admire them for doing, but yet admit that they are not bound to do; it is not a case of moral obligation." But surely we have a moral obligation to act in the best way possible. Another distinction is that given by Kant[2] between Duties of Perfect and Imperfect Obligation. According to this classification, Duties of Perfect Obligation are those in which a definite demand is made upon us, without any qualification—as, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not lie, Thou shalt not steal. These are, for the most part, negative. On the other hand, most of our positive obligations cannot be stated in this absolute way. The duty of beneficence, for instance, is relative to time, place, and circumstance. No man can be under an obligation to do good in all sorts of ways, but only in some particular ways, which he must in general discover for himself. Hence this may be called an Imperfect Obligation, because it cannot be definitely formulated.

Now it is no doubt true that there is a distinction of this kind. There is, indeed, a threefold distinction between

[1] *Utilitarianism*, chap. v. Some other writers have limited the application of the term Justice to those actions which can be enforced by national law. Thus Adam Smith says (*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part II., sect. II., chap. i.): "The man who barely abstains from violating either the person, or the estate, or the reputation of his neighbours, has surely very little positive merit. He fulfils, however, all the rules of what is peculiarly called justice, and does everything which his equals can with propriety force him to do, or which they can punish him for not doing. We may often fulfil all the rules of justice by sitting still and doing nothing." *Cf.* the Note at the end of chap. x.

[2] *Metaphysic of Morals*, section II. (Abbott's translation, p. 39). Observe what is said in Mr. Abbott's note. *Cf.* also Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii., pp. 382-3.

duties of different kinds. There are, in the first place, those duties that can be definitely formulated, and embodied in the laws of a State,[1] with penalties attached to their violation. In the second place, there are those duties that cannot be put into the form of national laws, or that it would be very inconvenient to put into such a form, but which, nevertheless, every good citizen may be expected to observe. In the third place, there are duties which we may demand of some, but not of others; or which different individuals can only be expected to fulfil in varying degrees.[2] But the distinction between these different classes of duties is not a rigid one. The duties that can be made obligatory by law vary from time to time, according to the constitution of the State concerned, and the degree of the civilization of its people. The same applies to those duties that every good citizen may fairly be expected to observe. Consequently, while at any given time and place it might be possible to draw out a list of the Duties of Perfect Obligation, and to express them in a code of Commandments, yet the tables of stone on which these were engraved would require to be periodically broken up. And many of the most important duties for any particular individual would remain unformulated.

§ **13**. MY STATION AND ITS DUTIES.—The determination of a man's duties, therefore, must be left largely to his individual insight. Ethics can do little more than lay down

[1] This was the original meaning of Duties of Perfect Obligation. Kant altered the use of the phrase. Some points in connection with the relation between Ethics and Jurisprudence will be found well brought out in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part VI., sect. IV.

[2] The fulfilment of these in an eminent degree might be said to constitute Virtue, as distinguished from Duty, in the sense explained above (p. 203). But *cf.* below, p. 211.

commandments with regard to his general attitude in acting. In the details of his action, however, a man is not left entirely without guidance. Human beings do not drop from the clouds. Men are born with particular aptitudes and in a particular environment; and they generally find their sphere of activity marked out for them, within pretty narrow limits. They find themselves fixed in a particular station, helping to carry forward a general system of life; and their chief duties are connected with the effective execution of their work. Hence the force of Carlyle's great principle, "Do the Duty that lies nearest thee."[1] The prime duty of a workman of any kind is to do his work well, to be a good workman.[2] Of course he must first have ascertained that his work is a valuable one, and one that he is fitted to do well. Having thus found his place in life, he will not as a rule have much difficulty in ascertaining

[1] *Sartor Resartus*, Book II., chap. ix.: "The situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man." See also the admirable chapter by Mr. Bradley on "My Station and its Duties" (*Ethical Studies*, Essay V.). *Cf.* Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, Part II: "The moral endeavour of man takes the form not of isolated fancies about right and wrong, not of attempts to frame a morality for himself, not of efforts to bring into being some praiseworthy ideal never realized; but the form of sustaining and furthering the moral world of which he is a member." Thus we agree, after all, with the view of Dr. Johnson (see above, p. 133, *note*), that a good action is one that "is driving on the system of life." But for this view we now have a rational justification.

[2] *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 45: "An artisan or an artist or a writer who does not 'do his best' is not only an inferior workman but a bad man." Mr. Muirhead quotes Carlyle's saying about a bad joiner, that he "broke the whole decalogue with every stroke of his hammer." See also Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 112: "The good artisan 'has his heart in his work.' His self-respect makes it necessary for him to respect his technical or artistic capacity; and to do the best by it that he can without scrimping or lowering."

what are the commandments that apply within that sphere. Hence the important point on the whole is not to know what the rules of action are, but rather the type of character that is to be developed in us. A well-developed character, placed in a given situation, will soon discover rules for itself.[1] Thus, we are naturally led from the consideration of the commandments to the consideration of the virtues.[2]

[1] It may be worth while to note here that rules of conduct are, in general, valuable for us in proportion as our interest in the concrete matter concerned is small. A man does not want rules for the performance of anything which he has deeply at heart. Thus, a serious student has little need of rules for study. His own interest is a sufficient guide. On the other hand, a man whose main work does not lie in study, but who is able to devote a few hours to it now and then, may find it advantageous to have definite rules for the performance of the uncongenial task. So it is in life generally. Christianity abolished the external rules of Judaism, by enjoining upon us an interest in life instead. Such an interest is the only safe final guide. But so long as such an interest cannot be pre-supposed, particular rules retain a certain relative value. Some very suggestive remarks on this point will be found in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part III., sect. IV. He there gives some interesting examples of actions which are naturally done in obedience to rule, because our interest in them is slight; and of others which are naturally done rather from an interest in the object to be attained.

[2] Prof. Dewey says (*Outlines of Ethics*, p. 231): "It is a common remark that moral codes change from 'Do not' to 'Do,' and from this to 'Be.' A Mosaic code may attempt to regulate the specific acts of life. Christianity says, 'Be ye perfect.' The effort to exhaust the various special right acts is futile. They are not the same for any two men, and they change constantly with the same man. The very words which denote virtues come less and less to mean specific acts, and more the spirit in which conduct occurs." *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 68, *note*.

NOTE ON RULES OF CONDUCT.

I have no doubt that some readers will be a good deal disappointed by the results of this chapter. Experience teaches me that most of those who take up the study of Ethics expect to find in it some cut-and-dried formulas for the guidance of their daily lives. They expect the ethical philosopher to explain to them what they ought to get up and do to-morrow morning. And no doubt it is true enough in a sense that the ethical philosopher, if he is good for anything, will explain this. He will explain to them the spirit in which they ought to apply themselves to the particular situation before them to-morrow morning. But most people, and especially most English people, are not content with this. The cause of this discontent is no doubt partly that most of us have become accustomed in our youth to a code of Ten Commandments, generally accompanied by certain subordinate rules deduced from them. Partly, again, it is that most of the English schools of Ethics have connected themselves closely with Jurisprudence,[1] and have thus given encouragement to the notion that a set of moral laws might be devised similar to the laws of a nation. Now I admit of course that it is possible to draw out certain rules of conduct, founded on the general nature of human life and the conditions under which it has to be carried on; and it is part of the task of the moral philosopher to explain the general nature of these rules, and to show their place in the conduct of life. This I have endeavoured to do. But to suppose that Ethics is called upon to do more than this appears to me to be a most fatal error. Happily life cannot yet be reduced to rule. A moral genius must always, like Mirabeau, "swallow his formulas" and start afresh. Pedantry will not carry one far in life,[2] any more than in literature.

At the same time, while emphasizing this point, I have certainly no wish to rush to the opposite extreme. There has been so strong a tendency in former times to lay down an absolute "ought" in Ethics,

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[1] The chaotic state of English law led men like Bentham to seek for a rational basis of Jurisprudence in ethical principles. This application of Ethics has reacted on the study of Ethics itself. On the Continent the prevalence of Roman Law has perhaps made the demand for a fresh ethical basis less urgent.

[2] There are some good remarks on this point in Adler's *Moral Instruction of Children*, pp. 19—23.

with a rigid scheme of obligations hanging from it, that now, by a not unnatural reaction, we find a number of our ethical writers treading very gingerly, hesitating to say that there is any such thing as duty, apologizing for the use of the word "ought," and mildly conceding that Ethics is of no practical value. This extreme appears to me to be quite as pernicious as the other. It is the function of the ethical philosopher to discover and define the supreme end of life. This is what all the great ethical writers have done, from Plato and Aristotle to Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, and Green. As soon as this end is clearly seen, the duty of pursuing it becomes an absolute imperative, from which there is no escape. And with this end in view, the whole of our life falls into shape. Hence, as Aristotle puts it,[1] "from a practical point of view it much concerns us to know this good; for then, like archers shooting at a definite mark, we shall be more likely to attain what we want." Undoubtedly, in this sense, Ethics is of the greatest practical value. Nor is its value in any way diminished by the fact that the moral genius, or even the man of ordinary good sense, may act well without any knowledge of Ethics. The human end is involved in man's very existence. No one can exist at all without being in some degree conscious of it. The task of the moral philosopher is only that of bringing it to clear consciousness. *Only* that! In the same wav, the task of the poet is *only* that of making clear to us the beauty that is everywhere around us. The task of the metaphysician is *only* that of bringing out the meaning and connection of the principles made use of in the sciences. This "only" is a little out of place.

While we must insist, then, that it is not the task of Ethics to furnish us with copy-book headings for the guidance of life, we must equally insist that it *is* its task to furnish us with practical principles—to bring the nature of the highest good to clear consciousness, and to indicate the general nature of the means by which this good is to be attained. It thus tells us, not indeed the particular rules by which our lives are to be guided, but what is of infinitely greater practical importance—the spirit in which our lives are to be lived.[2]

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[1] *Ethics*, I. ii. 2.

[2] In the first chapter of this book, in explaining what may fairly be expected of the moral philosopher, I have perhaps made it appear too much as if he might be expected to supply us with particular rules. The reason of this is, that I was anxious to start, as far as possible, from the point of view of the ordinary moral consciousness. Most of us begin by learning rules and commandments. The notion of

I am well aware that all this will seem unsatisfactory to many minds. The military spirit is deeply rooted in human nature. Men are eager to catch the word of command, and are disappointed when they are only told, as by Jesus, to "love one another," or, as by Hegel, to "be persons," or, as in the vision of Dante, to "follow their star." And, indeed, as I have already said, Ethics does supply something more than this. It does interpret for us the meaning and importance of some more special rules. But assuredly neither Ethics nor anything else will tell a man what in particular he is to do. There would be an end of the whole significance of life if any such information were to be had. It is the special business of every human being to find out for himself what he is to do, and to do it. Ethics only instructs him where to look for it, and helps him to see that it is worth while both to find it and to do it.[1]

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what is "right" comes before that of what is "good." (See above, pp. 1—2.) My object has been to start from the conception of absolute obligation, and advance from this to the understanding of the supreme end. Having reached a view of the end, we see that the obligation founded on it does not take the form of a set of rules or commandments (as we might at first have been disposed to expect), but only that of the one absolute imperative—Endeavour to realize the supreme end! See also Appendix B, Notes I. and II.

[1] Some excellent remarks on this point will be found in Mr. Bosanquet's article on "The Communication of Moral Ideas as a Function of an Ethical Society," in the *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. I., No. 1 (October, 1890), pp. 79—97 (now republished in *The Civilization of Christendom*). Some good criticisms by Professor Dewey will be found in the following number of the same Journal.

CHAPTER XII.

THE VIRTUES.

"Εἰ δὴ τοῦτ' ἐπὶ πάντων οὕτως ἔχει, καὶ ἡ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀρετὴ εἴη ἂν ἕξις ἀφ' ἧς ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος γίνεται καὶ ἀφ' ἧς εὖ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἔργον ἀποδώσει."[1]—ARISTOTLE.

§ 1. RELATION OF THE VIRTUES TO THE COMMANDMENTS. When we have ascertained what are the most important commandments, we have at the same time discovered to a considerable extent what are the most important virtues.[2] The virtuous man will be on the whole the man who has a steadfast habit of obeying the commandments. There are, however, many virtuous habits which do not correspond to any commandments that can be definitely formulated.[3]

[1] ("If this holds good in all cases, the proper excellence or virtue of man will be a habit or trained faculty that makes a man good and makes him perform his function well.")

[2] Virtue (from Latin *vir*, a man or hero) meant originally manliness or valour. The Greek ἀρετή (from the same root as Ares, the god of war) and the German Tugend (connected with our English word "doughty") have a somewhat similar origin. The term is here employed to denote a good habit of character, as distinguished from a Duty, which denotes rather some particular kind of action that we ought to perform. Thus a man *does* his Duty; but he *possesses* a Virtue, or *is* virtuous. Another sense in which the term "Virtue" is used, has been already noticed. See above, p. 203.

[3] Mr. Alexander (*Moral Order and Progress*, p. 253) definitely connects the virtues, as well as the duties, with social institutions. In both cases there seems to be some exaggeration in this. *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 175.

Moreover, as the virtues are concerned mainly with inner habits of mind, whereas the commandments deal with overt acts,[1] the lines of cleavage in dealing with the virtues are naturally somewhat different from those that we find in dealing with the commandments. Hence it seems desirable to devote a separate chapter to the subject of the virtues.

§ 2. VIRTUES RELATIVE TO STATES OF SOCIETY.—The virtues which it is desirable for human beings to cultivate vary considerably with different times and places. They are more variable than the commandments[2]; because the latter confine themselves to those broad principles of conduct which are applicable to nearly all the conceivable conditions of life. At the same time, even the virtues are less changeable than they are apt at first sight to appear. The Greek virtue of courage, confined almost entirely to valour in battle, has but little correspondence to anything that is supremely important in modern life. Yet the temper of mind which it indicates is one for which there is as much demand now as ever.[3] And so it is also with most of the other virtues. The precise conditions of their exercise change; but the habit of mind remains intrinsically

[1] The Jewish commandments, as interpreted in the Sermon on the Mount, and by modern Christian thought, are of course concerned with the heart as well as with outer acts. Also the summary of the commandments in terms of love refers entirely to an inner habit of mind. But when the commandments are thus summed up, they cease to be particular rules. Particular rules relate to particular modes of action. *Cf.* Muirhead, p. 68. For a discussion of the relation of Virtue to Duty, see Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., chap. ii. The following chapters of the same book contain interesting analyses of most of the particular virtues. *Cf.* Rickaby's *Moral Philosophy*, Part I., chap. v.

[2] In that broad sense in which alone, as we have seen, universally significant commandments can be laid down.

[3] See Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book III., chap. v.

the same. Still, even the habit of mind does undergo some alteration. The kind of fortitude which is required for valour in battle is, even in its most inward aspect, somewhat different from that fortitude which sustains the modern man of science, politician, scholar, or philanthropist. Hence this side of ethical study is one which each generation of writers requires almost to reconsider for itself. However instructive the great work of Aristotle may still remain on this point (and there is perhaps nothing more instructive in the whole range of ethical literature), it is yet not quite directly applicable to the conditions of modern life. In order to understand what are the most important virtues for us to cultivate in modern times, it is necessary to consider them in relation to the structure and requirements of modern society.

§ **3.** THE ETHOS OF A PEOPLE.—It is for this reason that it is so important, from an ethical point of view, to study carefully what the Germans call the *Sitten* (the moral habitudes of thought and action) of different times and peoples. We have no English word that quite expresses this idea; but, instead of having recourse to the German, we may use a Greek term, and speak of the *ethos* of a people.[1] The ethos of a people is partly constituted by definite rules or precepts. The Ten Commandments formed a very important element in the ethos of the Jews; and they have

[1] *Cf.* Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, chap. v., especially p. 156, where the following is quoted from Hegel: "The child, in his character of the form of the possibility of a moral individual, is something subjective or negative; his growing to manhood is the ceasing to be of this form, and his education is the discipline or the compulsion thereof. The positive side and the essence is that he is *suckled at the breast of the universal Ethos.*" Similarly on p. 169: "The wisest men of antiquity have given judgment that wisdom and virtue consist in living agreeably to the Ethos of one's people."

continued, with certain modifications and enlargements, to form an important element in the ethos of modern European peoples. The precepts contained in the Sermon on the Mount have perhaps never been sufficiently appropriated by the world in general to be made definitely into a part of the ethos of any people; but they have undoubtedly exercised a most profound influence on the ethos of nearly all civilized nations. The ethos of a people, then, is partly expressed in definite commands and precepts. But partly also it consists in recognized habits of action and standards of judgment which have never been precisely formulated. Thus, in England there is a general idea of the kind of conduct which is fitting in a "gentleman"; and though it might be difficult to reduce this standard to the form of definite rules, yet it has undoubtedly exercised a great influence in forming the ethos of our people.

The ethos of a people, then, we may say, constitutes the atmosphere in which the best members of a race habitually live; or, in language that we have previously employed, it constitutes the universe of their moral activities. It is the morality of our world; and on the whole the man who conforms to the morality of that world is a good man, and the man who violates it is a bad man. Mr. Bradley has even said emphatically[1] that the man who seeks to have a

[1] *Ethical Studies*, p. 180. So also on p. 181 he says: "We should consider whether the encouraging oneself in having opinions of one's own, in the sense of thinking differently from the world on moral subjects, be not, in any person other than a heaven-born prophet, sheer self-conceit." There is, however, some paradox in this. A man may be a moral reformer in a small way, without being exactly a "heaven-born prophet." The suffering or witnessing of wrong in some particular form, for instance, often makes a man sensitive to an evil to which most men are callous. Also the *disciples* of the "heaven-born prophets" will for a time hold opinions different from those of the world. But what Mr. Bradley means is simply, Try to be as good as

higher morality than that of his world is on the threshold of immorality. But this is an exaggeration. For the ethos of a people is not a stationary thing.[1] It develops, like social life generally; and its development is brought about mainly by the constant effort of the best members of a race to reach a higher standard of life than that which they find current around them. The καλοκἀγαθός of the Greeks might occasionally permit himself to do many things, and to abstain from doing many things, which would scarcely be thought becoming in a modern "gentleman"; while the teachings of Christianity hold up to us an ideal of life which has not yet been fully embodied in the current morality of the world. While, then, it is on the whole true that the ethos of our people furnishes us with our moral standard, it must yet be remembered that it is often desirable to elevate that standard itself.[2]

Now the virtues that are current among a people at a given time are the expression in particular forms of the ethos of that people; and their significance can be appreciated only in relation to the general life of the times.

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your world *first*: after that you may seek to make it better. His meaning is similar to that of Burke (*Reflections on the Revolution in France*): "We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason; because we suspect that the stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages."

[1] Sometimes, indeed, it is a highly artificial thing, brought into being by the accidental circumstances of a particular time and place. Thus Adam Smith remarks (*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part V., sect. II.) that "in the reign of Charles II. a degree of licentiousness was deemed the characteristic of a liberal education. It was connected, according to the notions of those times, with generosity, sincerity, magnanimity, loyalty, and proved that the person who acted in this manner was a gentleman, and not a puritan."

[2] *Cf.* below, chap. xv.

§ 4. VIRTUES RELATIVE TO THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS.—Not only, however, are the virtues relative to different times and different social conditions: they are also relative to the functions that different individuals have to fulfil in society. Here again it is true that the differences are not so great as one is apt to think. We are apt to say that a poor man cannot exercise the virtue of liberality; and that a man who is rich and prosperous has little need for the virtue of patience. This is to a large extent true; yet the habit of mind which with a rich man leads to liberality may equally well be present, and is equally admirable, in one who is poor. And the same applies to other qualities. Still, it remains on the whole true that the virtues which we respect and admire in a man are not quite the same as those of a woman; that those of the rich are not quite the same as those of the poor; those of an old man not quite the same as those of a young man; those of a parent not quite the same as those of a child; those of a man in health not quite the same as those of one who is sick; those of a commercial man not quite the same as those of a man of science; and so in other cases. In describing the virtues, therefore, we must either go somewhat minutely into the consideration of different circumstances of life, and of the qualities that are most desirable under these varying conditions; or else we must confine ourselves to statements that are very general and vague. The limits of space and the difficulties of the subject both lead us to adopt the latter alternative.

§ 5. THE NATURE OF VIRTUE.—The virtues, as was admirably pointed out by Aristotle, are habits of deliberate choice. To be virtuous means to have a character so developed that we habitually choose to act in the right way. Now as the right action nearly always stands between two

possible bad actions—one erring by excess and the other by defect—Aristotle considered[1] that virtue consists essentially in a habit of choosing the mean. He well added, however, that it is the choice of the *relative* mean—*i. e.* of the particular intermediate course which is appropriate to the particular individual in question, and to the particular circumstances in which he is placed. That mean must be determined in each case by a consideration of its conduciveness to the general development of social life. To hit upon it rightly is often a problem for individual tact and insight; but a study of the greatest examples in human history is in many cases a valuable aid in deciding on the most fitting conduct in a given case.

§ **6**. THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.—From the earliest periods of ethical speculation, attempts have been made to enumerate the various forms of virtues. The most celebrated of these lists are those given by Plato and Aristotle. The former seems to have been current among Greek moralists even before the time of Plato. It has at least the merit of simplicity, containing only four cardinal virtues—Wisdom (or Prudence), Courage (or Fortitude), Temperance (or Self-Restraint), and Justice (or Righteousness). This classification, however, simple as it appears, was soon found to give rise to considerable difficulties. It began to be perceived, for instance, that in a certain sense the first of the virtues includes all the others; for every virtuous activity consists in acting wisely in some particular relationship. Again, Justice (or Righteousness) seems to be made somewhat too comprehensive in its meaning when it is used to include (as, on this acceptation, it must) all the social virtues. Perceiving these and other defects in the catalogue of the

[1] *Ethics*, Book II., chaps. vi.—ix. *Cf.* Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 59.

virtues, Aristotle was led to a considerable expansion of the list.[1] But his expansion had so constant a reference to the virtues that were expected of an Athenian citizen that its direct interest for modern life is comparatively slight. And it would perhaps be somewhat futile to attempt to draw up any similar catalogue specially adapted for modern times, with their complicated problems and varied relationships.[2] Nevertheless, a few suggestions towards such a catalogue may be found useful.

We may note, to begin with, the distinction which is commonly drawn between self-regarding virtues and those that are altruistic, or have reference to the good of others. This distinction is apt to be misleading. The individual has no life of his own independent of his social relations; and any virtue which has reference to the good of the individual, must have reference also to social well-being. This fact, however, need not prevent us from distinguishing between

[1] It might be held, however, that Plato and Aristotle were in reality engaged on distinct problems. Plato sought to give an account of the Cardinal Virtues—*i. e.* the general elements involved in *all* virtuous activities; whereas Aristotle sought to give a list of special virtues, exhibited not in all virtuous activities, but in particular kinds of virtuous activity. But this view seems to me to be scarcely tenable. The distinction here referred to is clearly drawn by Prof. Dewey in his *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 230. I am doubtful, however, whether his interpretation of the term "cardinal virtue" is sanctioned by the best usage. He means those general characteristics of a virtuous attitude, such as purity of heart, disinterestedness, conscientiousness, and the like, which belong to the very essence of virtue as such. The relation of such qualities of the "inner life" to the virtues proper is partly dealt with in the next chapter. For the origin of the phrase "cardinal virtue," see Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 133. *Cf.* Rickaby's *Moral Philosophy*, p. 84.

[2] An interesting list has been drawn up, in the form of a table, by Mr. Muirhead, in his *Elements of Ethics*, p. 186. Some suggestive remarks on the particular virtues required in modern life will be found in Adler's *Moral Instruction of Children*, Lectures XI.—XV.

the life of an individual and the wider world to which it is related; and some virtues may be said to bear specially on the former, while others bear more particularly on the latter. It may be convenient to look at these two classes of virtues separately.

(*a*) Taking the four Platonic virtues as a convenient starting-point, it is evident that courage and temperance are the two that bear specially[1] on the life of the individual. If we understand courage (or fortitude) in the wide sense of resistance to the fear of pain, and temperance in the equally wide sense of resistance to the allurements of pleasure, these two virtues will include all forms of opposition to temptation in the individual life. Temptation appears either in the form of some pain to be avoided or some pleasure to be secured; and he who is proof against these will lead a steadfast life along the lines that he has chosen. It is evident, however, that a man may be courageous and temperate in the conduct of his life, and yet be living foolishly. A wise choice of the line to be pursued is a necessary preliminary. If we understand the Platonic virtue of wisdom (or prudence) in this sense, we shall have in a manner a complete list of the virtues required for the conduct of the individual life. But it is evident that each of these virtues must be understood in such a sense as to comprehend under it a great variety of qualities not always found together in the same individual. Thus wisdom would require to be understood as including care, foresight, prudence, and also a certain decisiveness of choice. Courage, again, would include both valour and fortitude, *i. e.* both the active courage which pursues its

[1] Wisdom, as we shall see immediately, is also directly concerned in the guidance of the individual life. But it applies equally to our social relationships.

course in spite of the probability of pain, and the passive courage which bears inevitable suffering without flinching.[1] But these are not the same virtues, and are indeed perhaps not often found together in any high degree. Again, courage would have to be understood as including perseverance; and this seems a somewhat unnatural extension of its meaning; just as it is somewhat unnatural to include decision under wisdom. Perhaps the qualities of decision, diligence, and perseverance would come most naturally under a separate heading by themselves. These qualities are concerned not so much with the resistance to the solicitations of pleasure and pain, as with the resistance to the natural inertia of human nature. The Christian virtues of faith and hope are closely connected with valour and fortitude, in so far as they supply the latter virtues with an inner ground. A confident and cheerful view of life seems to be presupposed in the highest forms of courage.[2] With reference to temperance, again, this virtue would require to be understood as including the resistance to all kinds of solicitation from pleasures, whether sensual or intellectual, in so far as these tend to interfere with the conduct of life along the lines that have been chosen. Broadly speaking, then, we should be led in this way to recognize four distinct

[1] Mrs. Bryant (*Educational Ends*, pp. 71-2) regards fortitude as a higher virtue than the more active courage which goes to meet danger; because the former bears *actual* pain, the latter only the *fear* of pain. This is so far true. Courage is a blinder virtue than fortitude. The courageous man sets pain aside and forgets it, whereas the man who shows fortitude is one who endures an actually present pain which cannot be set aside. But on the other hand courage is a more active and voluntary virtue than fortitude. It not merely endures pain, but goes to meet it in the fulfilment of a purpose. In this respect courage seems to be the higher virtue of the two.

[2] Browning's portraiture of Hercules in *Balaustion's Adventure* well illustrates the qualities involved in the highest forms of active courage.

classes of virtues as bearing directly on the conduct of the individual life—wisdom in the choice of its general course, decisiveness in pursuing it, courage and temperance in resisting the solicitations of pain and pleasure.[1]

(*b*) The virtues that relate to the individual's dealings with his fellow-men are perhaps best summed up under the head of justice. At the same time, this term, as commonly understood, is much too narrow to include all the virtues that arise in such relationships. It must be understood, for instance, to include not merely the fulfilment of contracts, and the performance of every duty required by the laws, express or understood, of the community to which one belongs, but also perfect honesty and fidelity in all one's relationships with others. Mr. Ruskin has taught us to look for honesty even in modes of artistic expression; and this kind of honesty, as well as others,[2] must be included in our idea of justice, if that idea is to be made to comprehend all the virtues connected with our social obligations. Further,

[1] Mr. Muirhead remarks (*Elements of Ethics*, p. 183) that the virtues of courage and temperance involve one another. "In order to be temperate a man must be courageous: in order to be able to resist the allurements of pleasure he must be willing to endure the pain that resistance involves. Similarly, in order to be courageous, he must be temperate." But this is perhaps a needless subtlety. The man who temperately abstains from a bottle of wine must no doubt be courageous enough to face the difficulties and dangers involved in going without it. But does not this mean simply that temperance is a kind of *negative* courage? And does not the distinction between positive and negative still remain?

[2] Other instances of honesty, going beyond mere truthfulness, might easily be given. Thus the student who "crams" for an examination may be said to be dishonest, because his knowledge is not genuine. Again, what Mr. Bosanquet calls (*History of Æsthetic*, p. xiii) "the scholar's golden rule—never to quote from a book that he has not read from cover to cover," is a good instance of the extension of the idea of honesty.

the Christian ideal of life has taught us to expect something beyond the mere satisfaction of obligations in our dealings with our fellow-men; and indeed more than this was expected even by the moral consciousness of the Greeks. We commonly say that generosity is expected as well as justice; and in Christian communities love also is required. In a sense, however, we may say that all this ought to be included in our idea of justice.[1] For it is part of what is due from one individual to another that the latter should be treated not as a mere thing to which certain specifiable obligations are owed, but as a person, an absolute end, with infinite claims. It is true that as a general rule such ideal relationships are only partly attainable; but the thoroughly just man will endeavour to realize them as far as possible, and will be glad when the external relationships of mere contract can be transmuted into the relationships of friendship or Christian love.[2] Hence also such ideas as those of courtesy, and even of a certain cheerfulness and good humour in social intercourse; such efforts as that of being, as far as possible, all things to all men, of avoiding all appearance of evil, of abstaining from that which is lawful when it is not expedient, and in general all the chivalries of the Christian gentleman, are not foreign to the conception of justice. They are part of what we owe to one another as persons and as absolute ends.

We see, then, that, by giving a broad interpretation to each of the terms used, we may accept the old Greek classification of the virtues with but slight modifications. The only positive addition that we have to make is the recogni-

[1] Thus, generosity, as Mr. Muirhead says, "is only justice adequately conceived" (*Elements of Ethics*, p. 184).

[2] Here we are in agreement with Carlyle. *Cf.* above, p. 184. We doubt only whether the abolition of contract would of itself produce this desirable result. Justice must on the whole precede generosity.

tion of a virtue of decisiveness and perseverance. Perhaps it was natural that the Greeks should omit this, partly because their plan of life was more mapped out for them beforehand than it is with us, and partly because with their simpler method of life steady persistence in any particular line was less essential. Perhaps also the light inconstancy of the Athenian character, its perennial youthfulness, made the omission of this stern virtue easy. A Roman would scarcely have forgotten the idea of disciplined application :[1] an Englishman would not naturally omit decision of character : a German would remember *Daurbarkeit*.[2] Besides this, however, it must not be forgotten that we have been extending the meaning of the four Greek virtues to senses which the Greeks themselves would not have acknowledged.[3] But such an expansion of the conception of duty is inevitable as the world advances.

Having made this classification, however, we may at once add that any attempt to draw out such a list, like an attempt to make a list of the commandments, is of very slight importance. There is essentially but one virtue (what we may, if we like, call practical wisdom [4]), just as there is essentially

[1] The decisiveness of such a man as Cæsar, for instance (*cf.* below, p. 242, *note* 1), seems to be a virtue which cannot be identified either with wisdom, courage, or temperance.

[2] *Persistence*. *Cf.* also the peculiarly German virtue of *Treue* (*fidelity*). These virtues were all somewhat foreign to the Athenian character.

[3] This was habitually done by the early Christian moralists who accepted the Platonic classification. See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 133.

[4] It might be urged, of course, that there is a great difference between what Bacon calls "wisdom for a man's self" and that wisdom which manifests itself in a just regard for others. But wisdom for a man's self, in the sense of mere selfish prudence, is not virtue at all. Wise care of a man's own interests, in the sense in which that is a virtue, is precisely the same quality as that which leads, when extended, to a wise care of the interests of others. The only difference lies in the extension of our universe.

but one commandment. The particular virtues, like the particular commandments, are only special forms in which the right attitude of mind manifests itself. The effort to make a list of these forms is almost frivolous. I have thought it worth while to say so much as I have done on the subject, only in order to make it clear what such an effort would mean. Perhaps the best way of regarding the virtues is to treat them as those forms of character that are implied in the fulfilment of the duties or commandments; while those duties or commandments, again, depend on the elements involved in the social unity.

§ 7. EDUCATION OF CHARACTER.—Having ascertained what are the types of character to which we wish to approximate, we have next to inquire into the means by which these types are to be developed. Here, however, it would be necessary to trespass on the province of Psychology, and especially on that part of Psychology which is concerned with the theory of Education. This subject is still in a somewhat undeveloped state;[1] and there are only one or two remarks that seem to have any practical value for our present purpose. It is scarcely necessary to refer to what every moralist has noticed, the influence of example in the development of character. "As iron sharpeneth steel, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Care in the choice of friends, therefore, and above all in the choice of books, the friends of one's solitude,

[1] Reference may, however, be made to Herbart's *Science of Education*. Some good points will be found also in Guyau's *Education and Heredity*, Fouillée's *L'Enseignement au Point de Vue National*, Mrs. Bryant's *Educational Ends*, Rosenkranz's *Philosophy of Education*, and Dr. Adler's *Moral Instruction of Children*. Herbart's chief point is that the great work of education is to extend the "circle of thought." By a "circle of thought" he means very nearly what has been described in this handbook as a "universe."

is one of the most important points for this purpose. Still more important perhaps is the influence that comes from connecting oneself with some organization that has a certain completeness in itself. Schiller said that a man must either be a whole in himself or else join himself on to a whole. To this Mr. Bradley has added,[1] "You cannot be a whole, *unless* you join a whole." Complete development of character can be attained only by devoting ourselves to some large end, in co-operation with others. Such an attachment comes to different men in different ways. Some find it in the pursuit of science, others in particular practical interests, others in the political life of the State, others in poetry or religion. It matters little what the form may be; but unless a man has, in some form, a broad human interest which lifts him out of himself, his life remains a fragment, and the virtues have no soil to grow in. The first requisite, then, for the development of the virtues, is to unite ourselves with others in the pursuit of some end or ideal. In the second place, we may observe that a certain amount of ascetic discipline is sometimes found valuable. As Aristotle put it,[2] when a man's character has been twisted in one direction, it may be straightened by bending it in the other. Also, even apart from this, a certain check to the gratification of our natural propensities helps to waken up the will:[3]

[1] *Ethical Studies*, p. 72. Mr. Bradley attributes the saying to Goethe.

[2] *Ethics*, II. ix. 5.

[3] *Cf.* James's *Principles of Psychology*, vol. i., p. 126. Prof. James lays down the maxim: "Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day." He adds, "Be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points; do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it." I venture to doubt the wisdom of this. A man who is living with serious ends in view will, I think, always find sufficient occasions for ascetic discipline—

it prevents us from living on by rote, and thus serves as a stimulus to the development of character; so that, like Rabbi Ben Ezra, we may

> "welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough,
> Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go."

It is best, however, when such a rebuff comes to us in the ordinary course of nature. When it is consciously administered, it is apt to involve too much attention to our own inner development, which almost always leads to the production of a morbid habit of mind.[1] On the whole, it is generally better to escape from our defects, not by thinking about them and trying to elude them, but by fixing our attention on the opposite excellences. Dr. Chalmers used to speak of "the expulsive power of a new affection";[2] and it certainly seems a more effectual method as a rule to expel our evil propensities by developing good ones rather than by seeking directly to crush the evil ones. At the same time, it must be allowed that it is seldom possible to develop the moral life, like a flower, by a simple process of steady growth. Usually a certain amount of attention to the inner

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> "Room to deny himself, a road
> To bring him daily nearer God"—

without artificially seeking them out (except perhaps in the way indicated by Aristotle). See the whole passage from James quoted in Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 118, *note*. *Cf.* also Miss Gilliland's Essay on "Pleasure and Pain in Education" in the *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. ii., No. 3 (April, 1892), pp. 303-4.

[1] *Cf.* below, p. 229, *note*.

[2] So also Mrs. Humphry Ward says in *Robert Elsmere*: "This, indeed, is the only way in which opinion is ever really altered—by the substitution of one mental picture for another"; and again: "An idea cannot be killed from without—it can only be supplanted, transformed, by another idea, and that one of equal virtue and magic."

life is necessary; and often a man has to pass through crises, such as used to be called, in religious language, conversion or new birth, in which the attention is turned inwards, and the man is occupied, as it were, in feeling his own pulse and fingering the motives of his conduct. This is an attitude from which we ought to escape as rapidly as possible; but it is so characteristic a feature in the development of the moral life that it seems worth while to devote a separate chapter to the consideration of it—the more so, as it will lead us to a further study of what may be called the inner side of virtue.[1]

[1] With reference to moral education, it may be noted here that a certain confusion is frequently fallen into between the culture of the moral nature and the acquisition of knowledge about morals. The former is all-important: the latter frequently leads to nothing more than that form of spiritual pride which is vulgarly known as "priggishness." In the former sense, *all* real education is moral education. It is in this sense that Herbart says (*Science of Education*, p. 57), "The one and the whole work of education may be summed up in the concept —Morality." In the latter sense, on the other hand, a moral education would generally be a bad education, leading to nothing but self-conscious introspection. *Cf.* the important distinction between "moral ideas" and "ideas about morality" drawn by Mr. Bosanquet in his article on "The Communication of Moral Ideas" in the *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. I., No. 1 (Oct. 1890), p 86. See also Miss Gilliland, *loc. cit.*, pp. 294-5.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE INNER LIFE.

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."—JESUS.

§ 1. THE HIGHER INDIVIDUALISM.—While it is true that the life of the individual is relative throughout to the social unity to which he belongs, it is none the less true that it is in the personality of individuals that the social unity is realized. Consequently, though it is an error to think of an individual as having a life of his own independent of society, it is not an error to think of the individual life (realized within a social unity) as an absolute and supreme end in itself. Hence the efforts of such a man as Goethe after the highest culture of his individual nature are not to be classed (as shallow critics have sometimes classed them) with the strivings of egoism. The development of such a personality is at once a good in itself and a benefit to the whole of humanity. Nor is this less true, though the benefit is smaller, in the case of less comprehensive and significant personalities. What Mr. Ruskin calls "the manufacture of souls"[1] is the greatest of all industries. This is a kind of work, however, in which men are apt to be unsuccessful in proportion as they consciously set them-

[1] *Cf.* Walt Whitman's question, "Do they turn out *men* down your way?" quoted by Dr. Adler in his *Moral Instruction of Children*, p. 270.

selves to it. *Crescit occulto velut arbor ævo*, is in some measure true of most great characters. Even Goethe seems to have been somewhat injured by his too deliberate self-culture. "The unconscious," says Carlyle, "is alone complete"; the reason being that a perfect character is one that is objective, that loses itself in the world with which it deals, one that knows much and loves much, not one that is much occupied in the contemplation of itself.[1] Still, this objective point of view is capable of being cultivated, and the cultivation of it involves a certain amount of self-study. Some points in connection with this may now be noted.

§ 2. CONVERSION.—The religious experience known as conversion seems to be a normal fact in our moral development. Recurring to the mode of expression which we have so frequently made use of, we may say that this phenomenon occurs when a man is made aware of a higher universe than that within which he is living, and at the same time becomes conscious that that higher universe is one within which he ought to live. Such an experience occurs in its intensest form only when the higher universe that is presented to us is recognized as the highest of all—*i. e.* it occurs mainly in the religious life. But even apart from this, there is frequently a crisis in the moral life, in which we pass from some lower universe to a higher. The moment, for instance, at which a man decides to devote

[1] There is, in fact, what we may call a Paradox of Duty, analogous to the Paradox of Pleasure referred to above (pp. 92-3). Just as, in order to get pleasure, a man must interest himself rather in particular objects than in his own personal feelings; so, in order to act rightly, a man must interest himself in some object that is to be accomplished rather than in his own attitude in accomplishing it. Even the wealth of our inner life depends rather on the width of our objective interests than on the intensity of our self-contemplation.

himself to poetry, or art, or science, or philosophy, or the time at which he hears of the death of a friend, or loses or gains a fortune, or goes to college, or falls in love, will often be such a period. Life takes on a new aspect; and the mind turns in criticism upon the life that is past. In the case of the religious life, there is often a violent reaction against the past, a condemnation of its acts and even of its ideals, repentance and remorse. In less extreme cases there is only a certain shame for the low level of our former existence, accompanied frequently by contempt for those who remain at it, together with a fixed determination to follow higher things in the future. At such times a man is intensely conscious of himself. He perhaps keeps a diary to record his inner feelings. He withdraws probably in some degree from general intercourse with the world, and becomes somewhat cynical in his estimate of it.[1] He thinks he has discovered a new world which no one has ever explored before him. It is at such times especially that the inner life becomes prominent.

§ 3. CONSCIENTIOUSNESS.—Apart, however, from any such special periods as this, one who is careful about his moral conduct frequently finds himself called upon to reflect upon his inner life, in the way of inquiry whether his conduct conforms to his highest ideals. Carlyle has commended[2] times of action in contrast with times of reflection; but in the practical moral life it is impossible to keep the two long asunder. After action we must reflect upon our activities and criticize them, with a view to improving upon them in the future. Now in so far as we merely consider our overt acts, this involves no entrance into the inner life. But a man who is careful about his conduct will generally reflect

[1] See Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, for instance.

[2] Especially in his Essay on "Characteristics,"

not merely upon his actual conduct, but upon the motives by which he was led to it.[1] The habit of reflecting upon them has been called by Green conscientiousness.[2] It is doubtful whether this is a quite correct use of that term.[3] Conscientiousness seems properly to mean simply extreme care with regard to our external conduct. But, for lack of a better word, we may employ the term here in Green's sense. "A man may ask himself," Green says, "Was I, in doing so and so, acting as a good man should, with a pure heart, with a will set on the objects on which it should be set?—or again, Shall I, in doing so and so, be acting as a good man should, goodness being understood in the same sense?" This question is somewhat different from the question whether one's action has in itself been right. It is rather the question whether I, in doing an action in itself right,[4] was occupying a right attitude, or whether I did it from a wrong motive.[5] If a man is much

[1] As a rule, we do not do this. Although, as already remarked (above, p. 43), the moral judgment is passed on a *person doing*, not on a *thing done*, yet the interest of the agent is normally centred in a thing to be done, not in himself as doing it. *Cf.* also p. 229, *note*.

[2] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, pp. 269—271, and 323—327.

[3] See Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 202.

[4] *I. e.* right as an overt act. A man, in acting, is primarily interested in the question, whether he is bringing about a desirable result. In *judging* his action, as we have already remarked (above, p. 44), we take account of the motive by which he is led to bring about this result. But the man himself, in acting, does not normally think of this. He simply sees the thing to be done and does it.

[5] I suspect that when men inquire into their motives in this way, they are frequently using the term "motive" in the more inaccurate sense formerly referred to (above, p. 37). They are thinking of the *feelings* that *accompany* their actions rather than of the *ends* that *induce* them to perform these actions. But even in the stricter acceptation of the term, the inquiry into the purity of our motives is not irrelevant. See below, p. 232, *note* 2, and p. 241, *note* 1.

occupied with such a question as this, it is generally a sign either of a morbid state of mind or of the fact that one has not found his true vocation in life; for when a man has found his work and is doing it, he has little time left for such inquiries.[1] Moreover, if a man's mind is honest and clear, he can generally answer the question at once, without any elaborate investigation. Consequently, when a man enters upon such inquiries, they have seldom reference to any single action that he has performed, but rather to his general attitude in life.

§ 4. SELF-EXAMINATION.—Such self-examination is often a direct result of a new awakening to a sense of the moral imperative such as we have already described as conversion; but it may be carried on by men periodically, without any such reawakening. A man may ask himself whether his life is being lived on that level which answers to his ideal of what life should be. In asking this, he will generally mean partly to ask whether his actions, viewed as external facts, are exactly such as they ought to be—whether he has actually accomplished what was required of him in the given situation; and this is a question with regard to overt fact. But frequently he will mean more than this. He will frequently wish to ascertain whether the general principles of his conduct are right, whether he habitually acts in the best spirit as well as in the best manner—whether, for instance, he is perfectly disinterested in his conduct.[2] No doubt such an inquiry, as well as an inquiry

[1] *Cf.* Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 201.

[2] It is in such inquiries that we become aware of what may be called the inner side of the virtues. The qualities involved in this inner side of virtue—purity of heart and the like—seem to be what Prof. Dewey understands by the "Cardinal Virtues." See above, p. 218, *note* 1. It is probably true, as Green insists, that the inner and outer side of virtuous action are in the long run exactly proportioned to one another. "There

into the spirit in which particular actions have been done, is often an evidence of a morbid habit of mind. A man's interests ought for the most part to be concentrated in the objects which he is seeking to accomplish rather than in his own inner state.[1] And even if one wishes to view his acts with reference to the spirit in which they are done, it will generally be best to do this by studying some ideal type of the moral life, and endeavouring to follow in his path, rather than by a direct contemplation of one's own impulses and motives. The latter course has nearly always a tendency to paralyze action and promote egoism. Still, there are times when the study of one's own motives in particular actions is beneficial, and also times at which it is desirable to take a survey of one's general attitude in life. This is a part of self-knowledge; and though, as Carlyle says, the motto *Know thyself* is an impossible one to carry out with any completeness, yet it is important to make a certain approximation to the carrying of it out. One reason of this is, that it is not always possible in our actions to go fully into the reasons of what we do. We often require to let ourselves go, relying on the intuitions that have been acquired in the course of our lives. On such occasions it is important that we should know how far we can trust ourselves to go. For this purpose it is necessary to have an insight into the nature of our "besetting sins," and these cannot always be

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is no real reason to doubt," says Green (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book IV., chap. i., § 295), "that the good or evil in the motive of an action is exactly measured by the good or evil in its consequences, as rightly estimated." But he admits that this correspondence would be fully apparent only to omniscience. *For us*, a certain act may be evidently the right one in a given situation (*e. g.* the killing of a tyrant, the passing of an Act of Parliament, the relief of a destitute widow, *etc.*), even if we do not know what motive has led to its being done.

[1] *Cf.* above, p. 229, *note*.

discovered from our overt acts. There are few, however, who carry this kind of self-knowledge very far. "The heart is deceitful," and even those who observe it most carefully are apt to miss some secret chambers. The advice of an intimate friend will often help one more than self-observation; and even self-observation is generally more successful in the form of a study of our acts and habits than in that of a study of our secret motives.

§ 5. THE STUDY OF THE IDEAL.—I have already remarked that it is usually a more profitable way of developing the inner life rather to fix our attention on some external type than to attend to our own motives. Such types have frequently been selected and set up for the imitation of whole nations and peoples—*e. g.* Buddha, Jesus, Socrates, and the various Roman Catholic saints. And, on a smaller scale, we have innumerable biographies of heroes held up as examples not only of right action, but of a right attitude of mind and heart. Novelists also and poets have created for us imaginary types to serve the same end.[1] Indeed, this may be said to be the end of all poetry, in so far as poetry has an end at all. It is a "criticism of life," inasmuch as it presents to us higher ideals of what life might be and ought to be—and that chiefly on its inner side.[2]

§ 6. THE MONASTIC LIFE.—The importance of the study of the inner life, whether by direct self-examination, or by the contemplation of ideal patterns, has at certain times been so keenly felt that men have set themselves apart, like the

[1] On the moral and æsthetic significance of "types," the student may be referred to Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, pp. 74—76. Reference may also be made to Bacon's *De Augmentis*, Book VII., chap. iii.

[2] *Cf.* the famous passage in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, Book II., chap. ii., ending, "Who but the poet was it that first formed gods for us; that exalted us to them, and brought them down to us." See also below, chap. xvi.

Eastern mystics or the monastic orders of Catholic Christianity, for the express purpose of making this their study. We must regard this, in general, as an undesirable form of the Division of Labour. It had a certain justification in lawless times, when most men were so much occupied with violent action that they had no time for reflection. In such times men who led a contemplative life had the task of acting as the inner life for the whole community to which they belonged. And perhaps in some Oriental countries the nature of the climate renders it difficult to carry on the active and the contemplative life together.[1] The existence of a monastic order has in fact somewhat the same justification as the setting apart of a special day for religious worship. But just as, when the Sabbath is too rigidly divided from the rest of the week, it tends to become a mere ceremonial observance, with little reference to actual practice, so when the priestly or monastic order is too rigidly divided from the rest of the community, the inner life comes to be regarded as their special province, with which the rest of mankind have no concern.[2] This has a pernicious effect on general

[1] See Marshall's *Principles of Economics*, p. 12.

[2] *Cf.* the amusing account, in Milton's *Areopagitica*, § 55, of the man whose religion has become "a dividual movable": "A wealthy man . . . finds religion to be a traffic so entangled, and of so many piddling accounts, that . . . he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. . . . What does he therefore, but resolves to give over toiling, and to find himself out some factor, to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; some divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys, into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion. . . . His religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped, and sumptuously laid to sleep; rises, is saluted, and after the malmsey, or some well-spiced bruage . . . his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion."

morals, and ultimately on the morals of the monastic order itself. No order of men can confine their attention exclusively to the inner side of life; and the pretence of doing so turns rapidly into cant and hypocrisy. Just as it is desirable that secular interests should not be entirely forgotten on Sunday, nor the religious spirit throughout the remainder of the week, so it is desirable as a general rule that "all the Lord's people should be prophets," or at any rate that prophets should retain sufficient contact with the world to enable men of the world to catch something of the spirit of the prophets.

§ **7**. BEAUTIFUL SOULS.—Apart, however, from the existence of any special order for the cultivation of the inner life, we occasionally find individuals who set themselves apart for this purpose. It has been customary to describe these as "beautiful souls" (schöne Seelen); and Goethe has given a striking account of one in his *Wilhelm Meister*.[1] They are usually people who have been prevented in some way from taking part in the active affairs of life. The lives of such individuals have often a singular charm, and the good effects of their influence are sometimes felt over a wide circle; but this is especially the case when they do not entirely withdraw themselves from contact with active life. If they do this, their contemplation is apt to become emptied of all real content; their fine feelings turn into hysterical dreaming; and it is well if they do not end in madness.

§ **8**. ASCETICISM.—The development of the study of the inner life is generally accompanied by a contempt for pleasure. This sometimes goes so far, as in the case of the

[1] Carlyle erroneously translated *schöne Seele* "fair Saint." For some very suggestive remarks on the attitude of the "beautiful soul," see Caird's *Hegel*, pp. 28—31.

Indian mystics and the Mediæval monks, as to lead to the positive infliction of torture. The ostensible reason for this is frequently the idea that torture is pleasing to the gods; but the fundamental reason seems to lie in the desire of suppressing the flesh and its lusts. This is of course in some degree an essential of the moral life in any form; but asceticism seems to commit the error of turning the means into an end. It is important to repress our lower desires, in order that we may be able to devote ourselves, without let or impediment, to the highest ends of life. But the ascetic regards the suppression of desire as the end in itself. And the effort thus to suppress all natural desire frequently defeats its own aim. It concentrates attention on the objects of desire, and in a sense makes a man the slave of his desires as truly as in the case of him who yields to them. The best way to free ourselves from our lower desires is, as we have already indicated,[1] to interest ourselves in something better. It is only into a mind swept and garnished that the devils can enter: when it is well furnished and occupied they can find no room.

§ **9.** THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE.—The study of the inner life is, in truth, but a part of the general life of speculation as distinguished from action. The distinction between the active and the contemplative life has impressed men in all ages; and different thinkers have attached importance to the one or the other. Aristotle placed the contemplative life (meaning by that the pursuit of scientific and philosophic truth) above the practical life in which the ordinary social virtues are exercised.[2] It is essentially the same point of view[3]

[1] See above, p. 226.

[2] *Ethics*, Book X., chaps. vii. and viii.

[3] Except (a very important qualification) that Aristotle regarded the active life of social duty as an indispensable preparation for the higher life of thought.

that we find among many Eastern mystics and Mediæval saints, and, in more modern times, in such men as Wordsworth, who withdraw from the struggle of ordinary labours and find a higher life and a serener wisdom in the contemplation of nature. Wordsworth says of nature that,

> "She has a world of ready wealth
> The mind and heart to bless,
> Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
> Truth breathed by cheerfulness";

and the same thought finds utterance, in more homely fashion, from Walt Whitman, when he says, "I loaf and invite my soul." Ruskin also has sung the praises of rest and contemplation, and William Morris has found his earthly paradise in "a century of rest," in which the turmoil of modern civilization shall have been appeased, and men shall find a more worthy existence in a closer walk with nature. Similar ideas dominate Emerson and Thoreau. All these seem to think that the contemplative life is essentially higher than the active, and that this higher life is to be reached simply by withdrawing from the life of action. On the other hand, Carlyle preached a gospel of labour, and was fond of quoting the words of Sophocles that "the end of man is an action and not a thought," or the exclamation of Arnauld—"Rest! Shall I not have all eternity to rest in?" This view fits in well also with the robust philosophy of Browning, who cannot even accept the orthodox view of the rest of eternity, but conceives of it as the most fitting address to his departing spirit—

> "'Thrive and strive' cry, 'Speed! Fight on, fare ever, there as here!'"

The truth seems to be that an ordinary healthy human existence requires both sides. There are energetic natures,

like Cæsar or Napoleon, that seem able to go on with a perpetual activity, scarcely requiring rest or reflection. But the activity of such men is not usually the wisest or the most beneficial. There are others whose special mission it seems to be to withdraw from the world of action and bring messages to mankind from the inner world of feeling and reflection. But the wisdom of such men is apt to be deficient in the depth of universal applicability which a wider contact with life can give. The Wordsworths and Emersons are not equal to the Shaksperes and Goethes. For the majority of men, at any rate, times of action naturally alternate with times of reflection, times of creation with times of re-creation. In retirement we criticize the acts of life; in life we criticize the ideas of retirement. Action and reflection are the gymnastic and music of moral culture.[1]

§ **10**. Relation of the Inner to the Outer Life.—Looking at it in a more speculative light, we may express the relation of the inner to the outer life in this way. The life of unreflective action takes place entirely within the universe with which we have identified ourselves. In the contemplative life we bring ourselves into relation with the broader universe, whether revealed in the form of the moral ideal within us, some ideal exemplar without us, the beauty

[1] *Cf.* Goethe's famous lines—

"Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
Sich ein Character in dem Strom der Welt."
(" A genius forms itself in solitude;
A character, in struggling with the world.")

"Music" and "Gymnastic" were the names of the two elements in Greek education—"Music," of course, including what we call "polite literature" and a good deal more. Plato points out in his *Republic* (Book III.) that both these elements are required for the development of character. See Nettleship's admirable essay on "The Theory of Education in Plato's *Republic*" (*Hellenica*, pp. 67—180).

and suggestiveness of nature, the discovery of scientific law, or in any other shape. Now, since the life of all of us involves progress, or, at the very lowest, readjustment to new conditions, it is impossible that it should be carried on successfully without a periodic reference to the principles on which it is based. Like chronometers, we can go on for a time by the mere impulse of our moral springs, but if we are to be kept in permanent order we must readjust ourselves by the stars. On the other hand, it would be a poor chronometer which was perpetually being set, and never could be let go. A life of pure reflection would never acquire any positive content. It would have principles, but no facts to apply them to; yet it is by contact with such facts that the principles themselves grow. It is experience that tests them, and that sends us back again to improve them. "Best men are moulded out of faults"; for it is our errors of conduct that reveal to us the defects of our principles, and show us where they need improvement.[1]

There are, then, these two sides in every healthy moral life. It is a mistake, on the one hand, to suppose that all the worth of our life lies in its outer acts. This is not even the only part of us that affects those with whom we come in contact. "Men imagine," says Emerson, "that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment." Of course, this means in reality that the virtuous man acts a little differently from the vicious man even where the external act appears to be the same. The beauty of the inner life, in Aristotle's phrase, "shines through." Hence the importance of having the heart right. On the other hand, it is a mistake to suppose that we should be perpetually

[1] Hence the element of truth in the popular view about the necessity of "sowing wild oats." See below, p. 252.

fingering our inner motives. If we do this, we shall always find that they are somewhat wrong. The impulse of the moment can never quite rise to the dignity of the eternal ideal; and the more we watch it, the less likely is it so to rise. If we make sure that our overt action is thoroughly right, the right motive will soon become habitual to us;[1] and it is a man's habitual motives that are important, not the motives that may happen to enter into a particular act.

§ 11. THE VIRTUOUS MAN AND THE WORLD.—If our life is to be one both of action and reflection, it must also in a sense be one that is both in the world and not of it. A life of activity cannot be one of entire withdrawal from the world and its ways; yet the man who guides himself by reflection will not simply be carried along by its currents. The man who is simply reflective and not active is sometimes characterized as "over-conscientious."[2] Sometimes

[1] It might be thought, from what has been already said in chap. iii., that, if we are resolutely setting ourselves to do good actions, the motive of them must *necessarily* be good. But this is only partly true. If a statesman devotes himself persistently to the passing of beneficial laws, this must be because he takes the benefit of his country as *part* of his motive. But he may also be influenced by the desire of personal fame, or even by that of spiting a rival. A man can seldom be quite sure that some such lower motives do not form part of his inducement to the performance of an action which he clearly sees to be in itself desirable. But the best practical course is evidently that of habituating ourselves to the performance of actions which we perceive to be desirable. By doing this, we accustom ourselves to the point of view of the "universe" within which the actions are good. We forget the lower universe of personal ambition, or of personal spite; and, by forgetting it, we gradually cease to live in it. We lose ourselves in the pure interest in our objective end; and this is the highest motive—*i. e.* on the assumption that our objective end is really a desirable one, forming an element in human progress.

[2] See Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 323, and Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 201.

this reproach is merely an indication of prejudice on the part of "men of the world"; but often it is a mark of a real want of decision of character, like that of Hamlet, or a want of appreciation of the limits within which our moral life has to be lived.[1] It is a man of this type who is sometimes said to be "so good that he is good for nothing" ("si buon che val niente"). On the other hand, the commoner defect is that of living entirely within the universe of the society in which we find ourselves, and following a multitude to do evil. The good man adapts himself to his environment, but tries at the same time to make his environment better. He does not simply try to keep himself "unspotted of the world," but also to clear the world of spot. Such a man will in a sense be "not of the world." He will live in the light of principles which are not fully embodied in the modes of action around him. But he will nót withdraw into himself, and abstain from taking part in the activities of his world. This attitude of the virtuous man is beautifully depicted by Wordsworth in his sonnet to Milton,[2] in which he expresses both his aloofness and his readiness to serve.

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[1] Froude says of Julius Cæsar (*Cæsar*, p. 339), "His habit was to take facts as they were, and when satisfied that his object was just, to go the readiest way to it." A very conscientious man can seldom bring himself to do this, and hence lacks "force of will." *Cf.* above, pp. 82-3. Descartes was so much afraid of the indecision due to a reflective habit, that he thought it necessary to make it a special practical rule for himself, never to hesitate when once he had come to the conclusion that a particular line of conduct was on the whole the best. See his *Discourse on Method*, Part III. (Veitch's translation, p. 25).

[2] *Cf.* also Milton's own emphatic declaration in the *Areopagitica:* "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." See also Bacon's *De Augmentis*, Book VII., chap. i.

"Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart;
. . . . And yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

§ 12. THE MORAL REFORMER.—This twofold attitude is perhaps best seen in the case of great moral reformers. Every good man, no doubt, is a moral reformer on a small scale; but occasionally in the history of a nation there arises a man who holds up new ideals of the moral life, and induces men in some degree to adopt them, thus advancing the general moral ideas of mankind. Types of such reformers are Buddha, Socrates, and Jesus. These are generally men who have a profound appreciation of the moral life of their peoples, and who by reflection upon it are led to transcend its limitations. There was no better Athenian citizen than Socrates, none more attached to his native state, none more ardent in the performance of civic duties, few more thoroughly at home in its customs and traditions.[1] But he was more than this. He had his hours of reflective abstraction, in which he went beneath the moral traditions of his nation and examined the fundamental principles on which they rested. This reflective examination enabled him to transcend the limitations of Greek morality, and to prepare the way for deeper conceptions of duty. Similarly, Jesus was no ascetic or recluse. He "came eating and drinking," and was familiar with the ideas and habits of his people, even of those that were regarded as outcast and degraded. But he had also his times of retirement, temptations in the wilderness, and withdrawal to mountains. This combination of active participation and reflective withdrawal enabled him to sum up the morality of his nation, and by summing it up to set it upon a deeper basis, which fitted it to become the morality of the modern civilized world. So it is with most great moral

[1] See Zeller's *Socrates and the Socratic School*, Part II., chap. v,

reformers. They hold, in a sense, the mirror up to their times and peoples. They show them clearly what is already stirring dimly within their own consciences. They often seem to proclaim something entirely new and contrary to the whole spirit of the age; and consequently they often become martyrs to their convictions, as both Socrates and Jesus did. And no doubt they often do, like Moses, bring down a new law from heaven. But the new law was nearly always contained implicitly in the current morality of their time. They only interpreted that morality more carefully and strictly, freed it from self-contradictions, and pressed it back to the fundamental principles on which it rested.[1] When they do more than this, their work is seldom entirely beneficial. It is too much in the air, and has too little reference to the actual condition of things, to have much practical effect. Perhaps we may venture to blame our own great moral reformers of recent times, Carlyle and Ruskin, that they have made too little effort to understand what is best in the spirit of their times, and that their censures, consequently, are too much like the voice of one crying in the wilderness, an external accusation instead of an internal criticism. But even this would be only partly true. Carlyle and Ruskin are on the whole no exception to the general nature of moral reformers. Much of what is best in the spirit of the age finds in them its best expression, and their criticisms are to a very large extent organic to the thing criticized. They are to a certain extent the criticism of the age upon itself, its condemnation by its own principles, strictly interpreted; and this is perhaps the only kind of criticism that is permanently beneficial.

[1] See Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, pp. 323—330, Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 233-4, and Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 187-90.

CHAPTER XIV.

MORAL PATHOLOGY.

"Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,
Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte!"[1]

GOETHE.

§ 1. MORAL EVIL.—So far we have been mainly occupied with the consideration of the moral life in its positive aspect as a development towards goodness and perfection of character and social activity. We must now dwell for a little on its more shady aspects. Man's life is not a simple struggle towards virtue and holiness: it is quite as often a lapsing into vice and sin. This aspect we have on the whole neglected; and we must now give a little consideration to it.

Each man's moral life may, as we have seen, be regarded as a universe in itself. This universe may be a broad one or a narrow one. In the case of the majority of men it is sufficiently narrow to exclude many human interests. This narrowness is a source of conflict. It causes the individual good to appear to be in opposition to the general good of humanity. There is a sense in which no one ever seeks anything except what he regards as good. *Quidquid*

[1] ("Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
Who never spent the darksome hours,
Weeping and watching for the morrow,
He knows you not, ye heavenly powers!")

petitur petitur sub specie boni. Evil is not sought as evil, but as a good under particular circumstances.[1] But the good sought is only the good of the universe concerned at the particular moment. This need not even be what the individual himself, taking a survey of his life, would regard as good for him: still less is it necessarily identical with or conformable to the general good. It may be the good of a very narrow universe—the universe of a man who is making no serious efforts to reach that rational point of view in which alone, as we have seen, true freedom is to be found; one who, remaining in servitude to his passions and animal propensities, prefers "bondage with ease to strenuous liberty." Indeed, there are even cases in which opposition to the general good becomes almost an end in itself; in which an individual is inclined to say, like Milton's Satan, "Evil, be thou my good." Social duty presents itself as a continual menace to a man who has not learned to identify the good of society with his own; and he is thus tempted to take up arms against it.[2] He cannot simply set it aside, as he can narrower goods that lie outside his own: it is a wider circle that includes his own, and he must either

[1] Many of the acts that we regard as vices were at one time scarcely vices at all. They are the virtues of a lower stage of civilization, a lower universe which has been superseded, but in which some men still linger. Thus, Mr. Alexander says (*Moral Order and Progress*, p. 307): "Murder and lying and theft are a *damnosa hereditas* left us from a time when they were legitimate institutions: when it was honourable to kill all but members of the clan, or to lie without scruple to gain an end, and when there was promiscuity of property." *Cf.* Dewey's *Outlines of Ethics*, pp. 215-16.

[2] *Cf.* Shakspere's *King Richard III.*:—

"And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain,
And hate the idle pleasures of these days."

identify himself with it or fight against it. This war against society seldom indeed presents itself in the extreme form in which it is depicted in Milton's *Satan* or Shakspere's *Timon of Athens*; but on a smaller scale we see it often enough in the wilful mischief of children, or in the anti-social delight that gives its edge to scandal.

But apart from any such war against the social good, even the best of men show at times "the defects of their qualities," *i. e.* the limitations connected with the particular kind of universe in which they live; and the more definite that universe is, the more marked are likely to be the defects. Hence the shortcomings which are often noticed in men of strong and original characters. A weak character has no definite limits. It flows vaguely over the boundaries of many universes, without distinctly occupying any. It excludes little, because it contains little. It takes on, like a chameleon, the colour of any universe with which it comes in contact. Such a person is not likely to offend profoundly against any laws of his social surroundings. He will rather be "faultily faultless," drifting securely because he is making for nowhere, carried safely by wind and tide without any force of seamanship. It is to such that the proverb applies that "Fortune favours fools." No one can find any fault with one who has "no character at all."[1] On the other hand, one who has great strength of character in some particular direction has generally some accompanying weakness. His universe is a clear-cut circle, and excludes many elements of a complete moral life. Thus, the great poet, tenderly sensitive and full of high aspirations, is often deficient in

[1] "Nothing so true as what you once let fall,
Most women have no characters at all."—POPE.

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to say that I do not mean to express agreement with this *dictum*.

steadiness of will and in attention to the more conventional rules of morals. The great reformer is apt to be inconsiderate of the weakness of others, and sometimes even unscrupulous in selecting the means to secure his purposes. The man who is devoted to great public achievements is often, like Socrates, unsuccessful in his domestic life. And so in many other cases. Hence in our moral judgments on individuals it is very necessary to consider not merely where they fell short, but also what they positively achieved or endeavoured.[1] A man's sins are the shadows of his virtues; and though a life of transparent goodness would cast no shadow, yet, so long as men fall short of this, the strongest virtues will often have the deepest shades.

§ 2. VICE.—Moral defects may be regarded either from the inner or from the outer side—as flaws of character or as issuing in evil deeds. From the former point of view, we may describe them as vices—vice[2] being the term that corresponds to virtue, and that denotes the inner stain of character rather than the overt act. From the outer side, we may speak of them rather as sins and crimes. The inner side is more extensive than the outer; for stains in the inner character may be to a large extent concealed, and not issue definitely in evil deeds—though they can scarcely fail to give a certain colour to our outer acts. It is chiefly Christianity that has taught us to attach

[1] *Cf.* Carlyle's Essay on Burns: "Granted, the ship comes into harbour with shrouds and tackle damaged; the pilot is blameworthy; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful: but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs."

[2] From Latin *vitium*, a defect or blemish. Sin appears to come from a root meaning a breach of right. The corresponding Greek word, *ἁμαρτία*, means an error. Crime is from the Latin *crimen*, an accusation or judgment.

as much weight to the evil in the heart as to the evil in outer deeds.[1] The more superficial view is to regard the latter as alone of importance. Such sayings as "whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart," gave a new extension to the conception of morals. Similarly, the conception of morality was deepened when it was recognized that an action which is externally good may in reality be evil if it is not done from the highest motive. "Whatever is not of faith is sin."[2] It was from this point of view that some of the early Christian writers spoke of the virtues of the heathen as only "splendid vices."[3]

If we were to attempt to classify vices, the subdivisions of them would naturally correspond to those of the virtues. Thus, we should have vices arising from our yielding to pleasure, or failing to endure pain, or not being sufficiently wise in our choice or strenuous in our purposes. We should also have various vices connected with imperfections in our social relationships. But into the details of such a classification we need not here enter.

§ **3.** Sin.—Although it is true, however, that the inner side of an evil character is quite as important, from a moral point

[1] The term generally employed by Christian writers, however, is rather Sin than Vice. And thus Sin, though properly referring to an outer act rather than to a stain of character, has acquired the sense of Vice, and indeed has come to bear an even more inward meaning than Vice. For Vice corresponds to Virtue, and means a general habit of character issuing in particular bad acts; whereas Sin, as used by Christian writers, refers more often to the inner disposition of the heart, want of purity in the motive, and the like. It is in this sense, for instance, that St. Paul speaks of "sin dwelling in him."

[2] *Cf.* Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 114-115.

[3] Green, however, rightly insists that the best Greek writers were perfectly aware of the importance of the inner motive. See his *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book III., chap. v., § 252; and *cf.* below, p. 275.

of view, as the evil acts that flow from it, yet it must be remembered that there is a considerable difference between vice that remains in the heart and vice that issues in an evil deed; just as there is a difference between virtue that remains mere "good intention" and virtue that issues in deed. Mr. Muirhead remarks on this point[1]: "How far the resolution is from the completed act has become a proverb in respect to *good* resolutions. It is not, perhaps, very creditable to human nature that a similar reflection with regard to bad resolutions does not make us more charitable to persons who are caught apparently on the way to a crime. Höffding (*Psychology*, Eng. ed., p. 342) quotes a case of a woman who, having got into a neighbour's garden for the purpose of setting fire to her house, and been taken almost in the act, swore solemnly in court that she knew she would not have perpetrated the act, but hesitated to state upon oath that she had abandoned her intention when she was surprised. With this we may compare the passage in Mark Rutherford's story of *Miriam's Schooling*, where, speaking of Miriam's temptation to take her own life, he says: 'Afterwards the thought that she had been close to suicide was for months a new terror to her. She was unaware that *the distance between us and dreadful crimes is much greater often than it appears to be.*'"[2] Perhaps we should say, then, not

[1] *Elements of Ethics*, p. 48, *note*.

[2] *Cf.* Carlyle's *French Revolution*, vol. iii., Book I., chap. iv.: "From the purpose of crime to the act there is an abyss; wonderful to think of. The finger lies on the pistol; but the man is not yet a murderer: nay, his whole nature staggering at such a consummation, is there not a confused pause rather—one last instant of possibility for him?" This distinction is, indeed, generally recognized in our ordinary moral judgments—though perhaps it is not so much dwelt upon as the corresponding distinction in the case of good actions. *Cf.* Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part II., sect. III., chap. ii.

merely that "Hell is paved with good intentions," but that Heaven is paved with bad ones. It should be remembered, however, that there is an important difference here between good intentions and bad intentions. Bad intentions, like good intentions, are often frustrated by infirmity of purpose. In this case the good intention is not so good as the good act; whereas the bad intention is on the whole *worse* than the bad act. We do not think the better of Macbeth for his hesitation in committing murder; and often we feel almost an admiration for a determined crime. On the other hand, if a crime is prevented by genuine moral scruples, which arise often just at the moment when we have the opportunity of actually performing the deed, the hesitation which then arises is partly an exculpation. Thus we think on the whole the better of Lady Macbeth for her exclamation—

"Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't."

While, then, it is the case that a good intention is always inferior to the corresponding good deed,[1] it depends on circumstances whether a bad intention is or is not less evil than a bad deed.[2]

[1] Even this, no doubt, is subject to some qualification. A comparatively unscrupulous man may often perform an action on the whole good, where a more conscientious man would hesitate. In such a case we should not always regard the conscientious man as blameworthy. Still, even here, the good intention of the conscientious man is not so good as his good action would have been, if only he could have brought himself to do it—though it may be as praiseworthy as the good action of a man who is more unscrupulous.

[2] Of course evil thoughts may also pass through a man's mind without getting the length even of intentions. In this case they are not morally culpable. *Cf.* Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book V.—

"Evil into the mind of God or man
May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
No spot or blame behind."

So also, from the point of view of the development of the character of the agent, a bad deed is often less evil than a stain in the character which does not go forth in action. An overt act brings, as a rule, an overt punishment. At any rate, the wickedness of the act is made openly apparent, in a way in which an evil thought is not made apparent. And when a man thus sees plainly the consequences of his action, he is often led to repent of it and amend his life. It is here that we see the element of truth in the common idea of the benefit of "sowing wild oats." Here also we see the force of Luther's *Pecca fortiter.*[1] If there is evil in a man's heart it is generally best that it should come out plainly. There is more hope of a straightforward sinner than of one who is neither cold nor hot.[2]

§ 4. CRIME.—The term Crime is generally used in a narrower sense than sin. It denotes only those offences

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Even such evil, however, may be taken as evidence of the existence of some lower universe within a man's nature—some extinct volcano, as it were—which may at some time or other burst forth into action. Milton, I suppose, would scarcely have admitted this—at least with regard to God.

[1] *Cf.* Browning's *The Statue and the Bust*—

"The sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
Is, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in view was a vice, I say."

See Jones's *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, pp. 111—118.

[2] Similarly, in the life of a state, it is often desirable that an evil should be brought to a head. For this reason, it has often been observed that it is generally better to have a thoroughly bad despot than a half good one. Thus Hallam remarks (*Constitutional History of England*), "We are much indebted to the memory of Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland, Louisa, Duchess of Portsmouth, and Mrs. Eleanor Gwyn. . . . They played a serviceable part in ridding the kingdom of its besotted loyalty." *Cf.* Buckle's *History of Civilization*, vol. i., p. 338, where this passage is more fully given.

against society which are recognized by national law, and which are liable to punishment. It is impossible that all moral offences should be brought under this category. Ingratitude, for instance, cannot be made punishable by law, because it would be practically impossible to specify the offences that come under this head. Again, the moral sense of conscientious persons is constantly outrunning the ordinary moral code of the society to which they belong, and thus inventing sins which are not recognized as crimes. Also when the evil effects of a sin fall mainly on the perpetrator of it, it is generally thought unnecessary to have a special law against it.

§ **5**. Punishment.—Sin always brings evil consequences with it, and these evil consequences always react in some way upon the perpetrator. It was one of the paradoxes of the Socratic teaching that it is worse for a man to do wrong than to suffer wrong. In a sense this is true. The consequences of suffering wrong are external. They do not hurt the soul; whereas when a man does wrong, he lowers himself in the scale of being, and thus wrongs himself worse than any one else could wrong him. Still, the evil effects of a man's wrongdoing upon himself are not always apparent either to himself or to others. He often seems to have got off scot-free. Now this is contrary to our natural sense of justice. We naturally think that a man should be rewarded according to his deeds. And this idea seems to have a rational justification. The virtuous man is fighting on the side of human progress, and we feel it natural to expect that the gods will fight with him, and that his labours will prosper. The vicious man, on the other hand, is fighting against the gods, against our ideals of right; and it seems unnatural and unreasonable that his course should prosper. If for a time the virtuous man is unsuccessful, we yet feel bound to

believe that his ultimate reward cannot "be dust."[1] His cause at least must prosper, unless the world is founded on injustice; and it is natural to expect and hope that he will prosper along with it. On the other hand, if the wicked for a time seems to flourish, we cannot help believing that his triumph is ephemeral, that in the long run the wages of sin must be death. It is here that the natural feelings of gratitude and revenge find their rational basis. Of course, we are not here maintaining that these feelings derive their *origin* from any such rational consideration. The psychological question of the development of these feelings is not now under consideration.[2] But these feelings could scarcely maintain their ground in the developed consciousness of mankind unless they had support in reason; and it is this rational support that we have now to take notice of.

Now it is out of these natural feelings that reward and punishment take their origin. In the case of revenge, indeed, and to some extent even in the case of gratitude, there is a certain tendency for the feeling to grow weaker as the race develops, so far as merely personal relationships are concerned. The primeval man resents keenly every wrong done to himself or to those who are intimately connected with himself, and seeks to return it at the earliest opportunity upon the head of the perpetrator. As the moral consciousness develops, this feeling of personal resentment becomes less keen. Men begin to learn that their merely personal wrongs are not of infinite importance; and under certain circumstances forgiveness becomes possible. They see that

[1] See the concluding paragraphs in Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*.

[2] On this point, see Mill's *Utilitarianism*, chap. v. See also Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part II., sect. II., chap. iii., where the distinction between an inquiry into the origin of revenge and an inquiry into its rational basis is clearly drawn.

a wrongdoer to them is not necessarily a wrongdoer to humanity; and it is only this last that is of moment. As regards society, however, there is not anything like the same weakening of the sense of injury. A wrong against social law *is* a wrong against humanity, and cannot be forgiven until the offended majesty of the law has been appeased. It is here that the justification of punishment is to be found.

§ 6. THEORIES OF PUNISHMENT.—Three principal theories of the aims of punishment have been put forward. These are generally known as the preventive (or deterrent), the educative (or reformative), and the retributive theories. According to the first view, the aim of punishment is to deter others from committing similar offences. It is expressed in the familiar *dictum* of the judge—"You are not punished for stealing sheep, but in order that sheep may not be stolen." If this were the sole object of punishment, it seems probable that, with the development of the moral consciousness, it would speedily be abolished: for it could scarcely be regarded as just to inflict pain on one man *merely* for the benefit of others. The second view is that the aim of punishment is to educate or reform the offender himself. This appears to be the view that is most commonly taken at the present time;[1] because it is the one which seems to fit in best with the humanitarian sentiments of the age. It is evident that this theory would not justify the penalty of death; and many other forms of punishment also would have to be regarded from this point of view as ineffective. Indeed it is probable that in many instances kind treatment would have a better effect than punishment. The third view is that the aim of punishment is to allow a man's deed

[1] Though perhaps it is most often held in conjunction with the preceding view (the deterrent).

to return on his own head.[1] This is the view of punishment which appears to accord best with the origin of punishment among early peoples: but in later times, especially in Christian countries, there has been a tendency to reject it in favour of one or other of the two preceding theories, because it seems to rest on the unchristian passion of revenge. In this objection, however, there seems to be a misunderstanding involved. Revenge is condemned by Christianity on account of the feeling of personal malevolence which is involved in it. But retribution inflicted by a court of justice need not involve any such feeling. Such a court simply accords to a man his deserts. He has done evil, and it is reasonable that the evil should return upon himself. Indeed there would in a sense be an inner self-contradiction in any society which abstained from inflicting punishment upon the guilty. Suppose a society had a law against stealing and yet allowed a thief who was unable to make restitution to escape scot-free. The laws of such a society would be little more than injunctions or recommendations to its citizens. They would not have the force of imperatives, or at least they would be imperatives which are liable to exceptions. Absolute imperatives must either be able to prevent any violation of their commands, or else must in some way vindicate their authority when they are violated. This seems to be the primary aim of punishment. It should be observed, however, that this aim in a sense includes the other two. If the aim of punishment is to vindicate the authority of the law, this will be partly done in so far as the offender is reformed, and in so far as similar

[1] For an emphatic statement of this view, see Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, No. 2. See also Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part II., sect. I., chap. iv., *note*, Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, Essay I., and Dühring's *Cursus der Philosophie*, sect. IV., chap. ii.

acts are prevented. And indeed neither reformation nor prevention is likely to be effected by punishment *unless it is recognized that the punishment is a vindication of the law.* It is only when an offender sees the punishment of his crime to be the natural or logical outcome of his act that he is likely to be led to any real repentance; and it is only this recognition also that is likely to lead others to any real abhorrence of crime, as distinct from fear of its consequences. We may regard the retributive theory, then, when thus understood, as the most satisfactory of all the theories of punishment.[1]

§ 7. RESPONSIBILITY.—In considering the subject of punishment, it is necessary to ascertain to what extent a man is to be regarded as responsible for his actions. The plea of insanity is always held to exempt a man from punishment; but some thinkers go much further than this. Some hold, in fact, that all crime ought to be regarded as an evidence of insanity, and consequently that no one is to be regarded as responsible for his evil deeds. Instead of punishing men for their crimes, therefore, we ought rather to try to cure them of their distempers.[2] This view, of course, rests on the purely determinist conception of human conduct. It regards a man's acts not as

[1] A complete discussion of the theory of Punishment must be left to writers on the Philosophy of Law. I have here noticed only those points that seemed most important. There are other possible views of Punishment. For instance, there is the view that a main object of Punishment is to get rid of the offender, so as to prevent him from working further mischief. This is a preventive theory in a somewhat different sense from that already referred to under that name. But this view would evidently apply only to some forms of Punishment. For an interesting treatment of the whole subject, the student may be referred to Green's *Collected Works*, vol. ii., pp. 486—511. Discussions on this subject will also be found in the *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. ii., No. 1, pp. 20—31 and 51—76, and No. 2, pp. 232—239.

[2] This is amusingly illustrated in S. Butler's *Erewhon*.

the outcome of himself but of his circumstances. If the view of freedom which we have already taken is correct, this idea is false. A man's acts, when he is fully aware of what he is doing, are the expression of his own character; and it is impossible to go behind this character and fix the blame of it on some one else.[1] The case of insanity is different. Here the man is alienated from himself, and his acts are not his own. Of course, we must recognize in the sane man also a certain part of conduct for which he is not entirely responsible. Ignorance excuses much, unless the ignorance is itself culpable. Any condition in which a man is not fully master of himself removes his responsibility, except when—as in drunkenness—he can be blamed for the condition in which he is. When an act is done impulsively, also, a man has not the same full responsibility as he has for a deliberate action; except in so far as he is to be blamed for having habitually lived in a universe in which impulsive acts are possible.[2]

§ 8. REMORSE.—When an evil deed has been done, and when the wickedness of it has been brought home to the actor, it is accompanied by what is known as the pain of conscience. This pain arises from the sense of discord between our deeds and our ideals. It is proportioned, therefore, not to the enormity of our sins, but to the degree of discrepancy between these and our moral aspirations. In the "hardened sinner" it is scarcely felt at all, because he has habituated himself to live within a universe with whose ideals his acts are in perfect harmony. It is only in the rare moments in which he becomes aware of the larger universe beyond, that he is made conscious of any pang. On the other hand, in a sensitive moral nature, habituated

[1] *Cf.* above, p. 144 *sqq.*, and Note to chap. viii., pp. 151-2.

[2] On this whole subject, see Aristotle's *Ethics*, Book III., chap. v.

to the higher universe of moral purpose, an evil deed is not merely accompanied by a pang of conscience, but, if it is an evil of any considerable magnitude, by a recurrent and persistent sense of having fallen from one's proper level. This persistent feeling of degradation is known as remorse. In its deepest form, it is not merely a grief for particular acts but a sense of degradation in one's whole moral character—a sense that one has offended against the highest law, and that one's whole nature is in need of regeneration. The best expression of this in all literature, is, I suppose, that contained in the 51st Psalm: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. . . . Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," etc.

§ 9. REFORMATION.—The natural effect of remorse[1] is to lead to a reformation of character. This effect may be prevented by "stifling the conscience," *i. e.* by persistently withdrawing our attention from the higher moral universe and endeavouring to habituate ourselves to a life in a lower one. This endeavour may easily be successful. There is nothing inevitable about the higher point of view. *Facilis descensus Averni.* But if we do not thus abstract our attention from the voice of conscience, the natural result is that we make an effort to regain the level from which we have fallen, to bring our own actions once more into accordance with the ideals of which we are aware. This rise often requires a certain renewal of our whole nature. It requires

[1] Some writers limit the application of the term "remorse" to those cases in which it does *not* lead to repentance. Sometimes the sense of aberration from the right path is so strong, that a return to it seems impossible, and the mind sinks into absolute despair. But there seems to be no sufficient reason for confining the term to such cases as these. It applies properly to any case in which there is a *gnawing pain* of Conscience. The word is derived from the Latin *remordeo*, meaning "to bite again and again."

a process of conversion like that to which we have already referred. Such a process is brought out in the Psalm which we have already quoted. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean . . . Create in me a clean heart." What is here figuratively referred to is the process of habituating ourselves to a higher universe, involving a transformation of our whole nature. When such a transformation is effected, it becomes almost impossible to act upon the lower level. Our habits of action become adjusted to the ideal within us, and go on almost without an effort. The will becomes to some extent "holy." Indeed some religious enthusiasts have even thought that such a process of "sanctification" may go so far as to make sin an impossibility.[1] But this is an exaggeration.[2] What actually is possible is that we should definitely identify our wills with the highest point of view, and habituate ourselves by degrees to action that is in accordance with this. In this way we may asymptotically approximate to a state of perfect holiness of will.

§ **10**. SOCIAL CORRUPTION.—So far we have been looking at moral evil only as it appears in the individual life. But a society, as well as an individual, may have moral excellence or defect. It may have its customs and its institutions so framed as to give encouragement to its citizens at every turn to live at the highest human level; or it may have them so devised as to obstruct the moral life and make virtue, in certain aspects, almost an impossibility.[3] Civilization ought to mean the arrangement of social conditions so

[1] *Cf. First Epistle of John*, chap. iii., 9.: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

[2] "Virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it."

[3] Mr. Muirhead enumerates, as illustrations of such institutions (*Elements of Ethics*, p. 161), "brothels, gambling dens, cribs, and cramming establishments."

as to make virtue as easy and vice as difficult as possible. But civilization, as it actually exists, is partly a product of the vices as well as of the virtues of mankind; and is adapted to the former as well as to the latter. It is not arranged for the extinction of vice, but at most, in Burke's language, that vice may "lose half its evil by losing all its grossness." It is arranged not for the promotion of virtue but only of respectability. Heroic virtue is in many ways made difficult rather than easy.[1] Among the rich luxury is encouraged. Wants are multiplied, and go on multiplying themselves, and men are tempted to seek the satisfaction of them by dishonourable means. The poor, on the other hand, are exploited—*i. e.* used as a mere means for the advantage of others. They have no leisure for culture and are exposed to many temptations. When a nation has reached such a stage as this, it often declines and falls. Indeed it must do so, unless it is reawakened by a reformer, such as in our own time Carlyle and Ruskin. Sometimes also it is saved by a revolution; but this generally involves almost as much moral evil as the corrupt state of society itself. Sometimes, again, a nation wanders so far from the ways of righteousness that other nations feel justified in stepping in for its punishment. It is in such cases that an offensive warfare seems to be justified. But it is seldom that one nation is thus entitled to make itself the judge of another. The Jews seem to have regarded themselves in this way in ancient times. In modern times only a combination of nations could feel themselves to represent the side of right reason against the corruptions of some particular society.[2]

[1] This at least was Carlyle's opinion. See Essay on "The Opera."

[2] This chapter is of course concerned only with the *ethical* aspect of moral pathology. For other aspects see Maudsley's *Body and Mind*, and other works on morbid psychology, criminology, &c.

NOTE ON MORAL SANCTIONS.

It may be well at this point to explain what is understood by the Sanctions of Conduct. The term has been introduced into Ethics in consequence of the strongly jural way in which the subject has frequently been treated.[1] A sanction means primarily a ratification.[2] Hence it comes to be applied to that which ratifies or gives force to the laws of a state—*i. e.* the punishment attached to their violation. The meaning of the term has been extended, chiefly by Utilitarian writers, to anything that gives force to the laws of Duty—*i. e.* to the *motives* by which men are induced to fulfil their obligations. According to the Utilitarian writers, the only motives are fear of pain and hope of pleasure. And the pains and pleasures may present themselves in a variety of forms. Thus, there is frequently a physical pain as a consequence of the violation of Duty. Again, there are the pains of social disapproval, and the pleasures of the approbation of our fellow-men. The pains of Hell and the pleasures of Heaven have also, at certain periods of human history, served as motives to right conduct. Now, if the view of Ethics indicated in the present handbook is to be accepted, all this is not of much ethical importance. The right motive to good conduct is the desire to realize the highest end of human life;[3] and what this is we have already seen. That we may be moved to act rightly in other ways is a fact rather of psychological, historical, or sociological, than of strictly ethical interest. It is also, no doubt, a fact of some importance for jurisprudence, education,[4] and practical politics. Since, however,

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[1] *Cf.* Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 8—10.

[2] *E.g.* "The Pragmatic Sanction." It is derived from the Latin *sanctio*, and means primarily "the act of binding," or that which serves to bind a man." *Cf.* Bentham's *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. iii., *note* to sect. II.

[3] It is scarcely necessary to repeat that this motive need not be consciously present. (*Cf.* above, p. 46.) In a particular good action the motive is as a rule simply the interest in some particular good to be achieved. But the ultimate justification of our interest in a particular good consists in the fact that it is an element in the general good; and our interest in a particular good requires frequently to be modified and corrected by reference to this.

[4] Sanctions, as already noted (above, p. 174), are of use as helping to form habits of good willing and good conduct; though this use of them should be gradually decreased, till the necessity for them disappears. *Cf.* Miss Gilliland's paper on "Pleasure and Pain in Education," pp. 301-3.

the consideration of these external motives plays a prominent part in the Utilitarian theory of morals, some further remarks on this point seem to be called for.

If the theory of Universalistic Hedonism is accepted, and if this theory is made to rest on the basis of Psychological Hedonism, it becomes important to consider the motives by which the individual is led to seek the general happiness. His primary desire, according to this view, is for his own greatest happiness; and he can be led to seek the general happiness only by being led to see that the conduct which leads to "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" is in the long run identical with that which leads to his own greatest happiness. Now it is chiefly by means of the Sanctions that this identity is shown. As Bentham puts it,[1] the general happiness is the *final* cause of human action; but the *efficient* cause for any given individual is the anticipation of his own pleasure or pain. "The happiness of the individuals, of whom a community is composed, that is, their pleasures and their security,[2] is the end and the sole end which the legislator ought to have in view; the sole standard, in conformity to which each individual ought, as far as depends upon the legislator, to be *made* to fashion his behaviour. But whether it be this or anything else that is to be *done*, there is nothing by which a man can ultimately be *made* to do it, but either pain or pleasure." Accordingly, Bentham proceeds to enumerate the various kinds of pain and pleasure which may be made to serve as motives to the adoption of those forms of conduct which it is desirable, with a view to the general happiness, that men should be induced to follow. These various kinds of pain and pleasure are what he calls the Sanctions.

Bentham enumerates[3] four classes of such Sanctions, which he calls the *physical*, the *political*, the *moral*, and the *religious*. If the pleasure or pain comes simply in the ordinary course of nature, and is not

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[1] *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. iii.

[2] Bentham does not, of course, mean that the principle of security is to be regarded as an independent end in addition to pleasure. He only mentions it as the indispensable condition of the certainty, duration, and fecundity of our pleasures. *Cf.* his *Principles of the Civil Code*, Part II., chap. vii. Of all the principles subordinate to utility, there was none to which he attached so much importance as to that of security.

[3] *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. iii. *Cf.* also *Principles of Legislation*, chap. vii., and Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, pp. 240—245.

attached to our actions by the will of any individual, such a source of motives is called a *physical* sanction. The pains following from drunkenness are an example. If, on the other hand, the pleasure or pain is attached to an action by the will of a sovereign ruler or government, it is called a *political* sanction; as in the case of ordinary judicial punishment. If it is attached to an action by the will of individuals who are not in a position of authority, it is called a *moral* (or *popular*) sanction; as when a man is "boycotted" or "loses caste." Finally, if it is attached to an action by the will of a supernatural power, it is called a *religious* sanction; as in the case of Heaven and Hell, or of the penalties inflicted by the Roman Catholic Church as the representative of the Divine will on earth. It may be worth while to give Bentham's own examples.[1] "A man's goods, or his person, are consumed by fire. If this happened to him by what is called an accident, it was a calamity:[2] if by reason of his own imprudence (for instance, from his neglecting to put his candle out) it may be styled a punishment of the physical sanction; if it happened to him by the sentence of the political magistrate, a punishment belonging to the political sanction; that is, what is commonly called a punishment: if for want of any assistance which his *neighbour* withheld from him out of some dislike to his *moral* character, a punishment of the moral sanction: if by an immediate act of *God's* displeasure, manifested on account of some *sin* committed by him, or through any distraction of mind, occasioned by the dread of such displeasure, a punishment of the religious sanction."

J. S. Mill accepted all these sanctions, but characterized them all as "external"; and held that we ought to recognize, in addition to them, the "internal" sanction of Conscience—*i. e.* the pleasures and pains of the moral sentiments.[3] All the other sanctions are to a large extent "physical." Indeed, Bentham himself says,[4] "Of these four sanctions the physical is altogether, we may observe, the groundwork of the political and the moral; so is it also of the religious, in as far as the latter bears relation to the present life. It is included in each of those other three. This[5] may operate in any case (that is, any of the pains

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[1] *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. iii., § ix.

[2] In this case, of course, it is not a *sanction* at all; since it is not regarded as a result of any particular kind of conduct, and consequently does not serve as an inducement to the avoidance of any particular kind of conduct.

[3] *Utilitarianism*, chap. iii., p. 41 *sqq.*

[4] *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. iii., § xi.

[5] The physical sanction.

or pleasures belonging to it may operate) independently of *them*[1]: none of *them* can operate but by means of this. In a word, the powers of nature may operate of themselves; but neither the magistrate, nor men at large,[2] *can* operate, nor is God in the case in question *supposed* to operate, but through the powers of nature." What Mill calls the "internal" sanction, on the other hand, does not rest on physical conditions, but is purely psychological or subjective; though the particular way in which it is developed is, no doubt, affected by the external environment in which our lives are passed.[3]

If we had accepted the Utilitarian theory of morals, it would have been necessary to discuss these various sanctions at much greater length. But from the point of view here adopted it is not necessary to concern ourselves any further with them.[4]

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[1] The other three sanctions.

[2] It might be urged that the moral sanction sometimes takes the form simply of an expression of opinion. The fear of adverse public opinion is often one of the strongest forms of this sanction. But I suppose Bentham would say that even in this case the expression of the opinion takes place "through the powers of nature," *viz.* through vibrations of sound or light.

[3] Professor Sidgwick notes (*History of Ethics*, p. 242, *note*) that even Bentham, in one of his letters to Dumont, refers separately to what are ordinarily called moral sentiments as "sympathetic and antipathetic sanctions." He thus partly anticipated Mill. But there is no official recognition of these sanctions in his published writings. The reason is probably that Bentham had a supreme contempt for such sympathetic and antipathetic sentiments. See his *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. ii., § xi, *note*.

[4] An excellent account of the Sanctions will be found in Fowler's *Progressive Morality*, chaps. i. and ii. *Cf.* also Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book II., chap. v., and concluding chapter; and Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 93—96. It should be observed that the use of terms is not quite uniform. Bentham's Political Sanction is sometimes described as the *Legal* Sanction; and his Moral or Popular Sanction is frequently described as the *Social* Sanction; while the term "*Moral* Sanction" is reserved for Mill's Internal Sanction. This use of the terms seems preferable to Bentham's.

CHAPTER XV.

MORAL PROGRESS.

"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before."—PAUL.

§ 1. SOCIAL EVOLUTION.—Although we have frequently referred, throughout the preceding chapters, to the fact that the moral life is to be regarded as a process of development, yet our treatment of it has been to a large extent statical. What has been said, however, in the closing paragraphs of the last two chapters, with reference to the work of the moral reformer, seems to lead us naturally to a more explicit consideration of the conditions of moral development. That there is a certain "increasing purpose through the ages," is a truth that is now in some form generally admitted, however much we may be tempted at times to doubt it. This is on the whole an entirely modern conception, and is somewhat contrary to the impressions of the natural man. It is not only to the graceful pessimism of a Horace that the present generation seems a degenerate offspring of heroic sires. The idea of a Golden Age behind us, of the "good old times," when men were uncorrupted by the luxuries and follies of a later age, of the "wisdom of our ancestors," when men looked at the world with a fresher and deeper glance, has a certain natural fascination for the discontented spirit of man. Nor is it entirely without a basis in fact. If "new occasions bring new duties,"

they also bring new opportunities for vice. Looking, for instance, at the commercial morality of the present time, and comparing it with the practices of more primitive peoples, we have often a difficulty in determining whether, in the root of the matter, we have advanced or receded. If in some respects our actions seem more trustworthy and based on broader and more reasonable principles, in other respects we seem to have grown more selfish and dishonest than men ever were before.[1] It is only when we pass from the actions of individual human beings to the consideration of the principles on which men are expected to act—the codes of duty and ideals of virtue which have grown up among us—that we gain any firm assurance of progress. When we reflect, however, that those higher conceptions of conduct which prevail among us could scarcely hold their ground if there were not some individuals who habitually acted in accordance with them, we may be led to believe that even in the individual life there must on the whole have been a certain advancement. And, indeed, this conviction ought to be rather strengthened than otherwise by the recognition that, in our modern system of life, there are depths of degradation which to a ruder state of existence are scarcely known. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* The grass, as Mr. Ruskin somewhere remarks, is green every year: it is only the wheat that, on account of its higher nature, is liable to a blight. So, too, a mere animal is incapable of such a fall as we find in man. As Walt Whitman says,—

> "They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
> They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
> They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God;
> Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented

[1] *Cf.* Marshall's *Principles of Economics*, pp. 6—8 and 361.

With the mania of owning things;
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived
thousands of years ago;
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth."

All this is, no doubt, very creditable to the lower animals; yet it need not induce us to envy their condition. Man's relative unhappiness, as Carlyle says, is due to his greatness. "The assertion of our weakness and deficiency," as Emerson puts it, "is the fine innuendo by which the soul makes its enormous claim." "A spark disturbs our clod"; and this disturbance brings with it the possibility of new forms of evil. Animals are not *capable* of the higher forms of sin. "The advantages which I envy in my neighbour, the favour of society or of a particular person which I lose and he wins and which makes me jealous of him, the superiority in form or power or place of which the imagination excites my ambition—these would have no more existence for an agent not self-conscious, or not dealing with other self-conscious agents, than colour has for the blind."[1] So it is also, in some measure, with the growth of civilization. Knowledge is power for evil as well as for good. The depth of our Hell measures the height of our Heaven; and when we are conscious of special degradation and misery in the midst of a high civilization, we may reflect, with Milton's Satan, "No wonder, fallen such a pernicious height." There seems, therefore, to be no real reason for doubting that in the general improvement of the conditions of life there is also a

[1] Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 131. It should, however, in fairness be noted that practically all the evils here alluded to are to be found in a rudimentary form even among the lower animals. What is peculiar to man is not so much the presence of new forms of evil as the clear consciousness that they *are* evil, and the consequent degradation in yielding to them. Still, it is also true that civilization creates more subtle forms of evil.

certain moral advance.[1] To the consideration of this advance we may now appropriately devote a few paragraphs.

§ 2. THE MORAL UNIVERSE.—We have seen already that the moral life of an individual is lived within what may be described as a social or moral universe. Such a universe is constituted by various elements. It consists, on the one hand, of a moral ideal, generally recognized by the society in which the individual lives. This ideal may be expressed in a code of commandments, in a series of injunctions, or in the form of a life which is set up as a model for our imitation. This is the ideal side of our moral universe. On the other hand, it consists of definite social institutions, such as we have referred to in Chapter X. Finally, it consists of certain habitual modes of action, acquired rather by half-unconscious imitation than by any distinct injunctions or efforts to copy an ideal pattern. In any given age and country these three elements of a social universe will nearly always be found in some more or less fully developed form; but often there is a very considerable divergence between the three. A people's ideal does not always bear a close resemblance to its institutions or its habits; and sometimes even its habits are not entirely conformable to its institutions. A religion of peace and good-will has been found not incompatible with the thumb-screw and the torpedo; and the existence of the

[1] Even Carlyle partly admits this. See his *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, Lect. IV. "I do not make much of 'Progress of the Species' as handled in these times of ours. . . . Yet I may say, the fact itself seems certain enough. . . . No man whatever believes, or can believe, exactly what his grandfather believed: he enlarges somewhat, by fresh discovery, his view of the Universe; and consequently his Theorem of the Universe. . . . It is the history of every man; and in the history of mankind we see it summed up into great historical amounts—revolutions, new epochs. . . . So with all beliefs whatsoever in this world—all Systems of Belief and Systems of Practice that spring from these."

monogamic family is not always a guarantee of social purity. A large part of the moral development of peoples consists in the effort to adjust these three elements to one another; though it also partly consists in the effort to elevate their ideas, and improve their institutions and habits.

§ 3. INNER CONTRADICTION IN OUR UNIVERSE.—The mere want of adjustment between the various elements in our moral universe is often of itself sufficient to suggest the need of a new ideal or of new institutions. Institutions to which men's habits cannot be adapted are soon felt to be unsatisfactory, and have to be abolished. This was largely true, for instance, of the institution of celibacy among the clergy in the middle ages. So, again, if our institutions and habits are in contradiction with our ideal, this will sometimes be the means of enabling us to see that our ideal is too narrow. The early Christian ideal has been in this way expanded by the absorption of elements derived from the Greeks and other pagan peoples. On the other hand, our habits may become gradually reformed, so as to adapt themselves to the institutions among which we live; and our institutions may gradually be adjusted to our ideals. This is perhaps the more normal course of the two. Sometimes there is a crisis in a people's life, in which the question arises, whether the institutions are to be revolutionized or men's habits reformed. There seems to be such a crisis, for instance, at the present time with regard to our industrial system.

§ 4. SENSE OF INCOMPLETENESS.—Even apart, however, from those contradictions within our universe which drive us forward by a kind of natural dialectic, there is also a tendency to progress in our habits, institutions, and ideals, due simply to our consciousness of their incompleteness. This incompleteness is often first brought to clear consciousness by some reformer who points out a certain want of

logic in our present system. Such a reformer points out, for instance, that we habitually act in one way under certain circumstances, but in quite an opposite way under other circumstances, when there is no sufficient reason to account for the difference. He may point out inconsistencies, for instance, in the way in which men commonly treat their children, being sometimes cruel and sometimes over-indulgent. Or he may point out the difference between the morality recognized in the relations between countries in their negotiations with one another and that recognized in the relations between individuals, and may ask whether there is any adequate reason for this contrast. Or he may point to the pains inflicted on animals in certain processes of vivisection, or in various forms of the chase, or in slaughter-houses, or even in the ordinary use of animals as instruments of human service; he may contrast this with the treatment accorded to human beings; and may ask whether, seeing that in respect of the suffering of pain there appears to be no distinction between men and animals, there is any sufficient reason for tolerating in the case of animals what would not be tolerated in the case of men. Or, again, he may turn to the *institutions* of social life, as distinguished from its habits, and may call attention to anomalies in the government of the country, in the regulation of family life, in the methods of industrial action, and in the various other organized forms in which the life of the community is carried on. He may thus criticize these institutions by means of themselves, showing that the principles underlying them are incompletely carried out. He may ask, for instance, upon what recognized principle women are excluded from certain functions and privileges which are universally open to men. Finally, such a reformer, carrying his weapon of criticism still higher, may attack our ideals themselves. He may ask

whether we are quite consistent in our ideas of what constitutes the highest kind of life. Is there not a certain narrowness about them? Do we not apply principles in one direction which we omit to extend in another? If we attach so much importance to the tithing of mint and cummin, should we not be at least equally careful about some other weightier matters of the law? If the ideal man should be brave in battle and temperate in his food and drink, should he not also show fortitude under disaster and self-restraint in power? Such questions lead[1] to an extension of the conception of our duties and of the virtues which we ought to cultivate; and this aspect of moral development is so important that it may be well to consider it a little more fully.

§ 5. DEEPENING OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.—There is no respect in which moral progress can be more clearly seen than in the deepening views which men are led to take of the nature of the virtues and of the duties that are required of them. This has been illustrated in a most masterly manner by Green in that part of his *Prolegomena to Ethics*[2] in which he contrasts the Greek with the modern conceptions of virtue—perhaps the most original and suggestive chapter in the whole of that great work. He takes up the two most prominent of the personal virtues recognized by the Greeks, courage and temperance,[3] and shows how in modern times both the range of their application has been extended and the conception of the principle on which they rest deepened. With regard to temperance, for instance, he observes that the Greeks limited the application of this virtue to questions of food and drink and sexual intercourse;

[1] Through the force of persuasion. It is here that Mr. Alexander's view of "Natural Selection in Morals" is in place. See above, pp. 129—131.

[2] Book III., chap. v.

[3] *Cf.* also Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 207—210.

whereas, in modern times, we apply it to various other forms of self-denial. He urges, moreover, that even with regard to those particular forms of self-indulgence which the Greeks recognized as vicious, the principles on which they rested the claim for self-denial were not so deep as ours.

"We present to ourselves," as he says,[1] "the objects of moral loyalty which we should be ashamed to forsake for our pleasures, in a far greater variety of forms than did the Greek, and it is a much larger self-denial which loyalty to these objects demands of us. It is no longer the State alone that represents to us the *melior natura* before whose claims our animal inclinations sink abashed. Other forms of association put restraints and make demands on us which the Greek knew not. An indulgence, which a man would otherwise allow himself, he foregoes in consideration of claims on the part of wife or children, of men as such or women as such, of fellow-Christians or fellow-workmen, which could not have been made intelligible in the ancient world. . . . It is certain that the requirements founded on ideas of common good, which in our consciences we recognize as calling for the surrender of our inclinations to pleasure, are more far-reaching and penetrate life more deeply than did such requirements in the ancient world, and that in consequence a more complete self-denial is demanded of us." And Green goes on to add that even in respect of those aspects of life in which the Greeks did recognize the virtue of self-denial, their recognition is less complete and far-reaching than that of the moral consciousness in our own time. This is especially true with regard to self-denial in matters of sexual indulgence. And the change which has thus taken place in our moral consciousness does not mean merely that we have extended the range within

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 284.

which certain virtues are applicable. It involves also a deepening of our conception of the principles on which the virtue rests. "The principles from which it was derived"[1] by the Greek moralists, "so far as they were practically available and tenable, seem to have been twofold. One was that all indulgence should be avoided which unfitted a man for the discharge of his duties in peace or war; the other, that such a check should be kept on the lusts of the flesh as might prevent them from issuing in what a Greek knew as ὕβρις—a kind of self-assertion and aggression upon the rights of others in respect of person and property, for which we have not an equivalent name, but which was looked upon as the antithesis of the civil spirit." Another prevalent notion among Greek philosophers was "that the kind of pleasure with which temperance has to do is in some way unworthy of man, because one of which the other animals are susceptible." "Society was not in a state in which the principle that humanity in the person of every one is to be treated always as an end, never merely as a means, could be apprehended in its full universality; and it is this principle alone, however it may be stated, which affords a rational ground for the obligation to chastity as we understand it. The society of modern Christendom, it is needless to say, is far enough from acting upon it, but in its conscience it recognizes the principle as it was not recognized in the ancient world. The legal investment of every one with personal rights makes it impossible for one whose mind is open to the claims of others to ignore the wrong of treating a woman as the servant of his pleasures at the cost of her own degradation. Though the wrong is still habitually done, it is done under a rebuke of conscience to which a Greek of Aristotle's time, with most women about him in

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 285.

slavery, and without even the capacity (to judge from the writings of the philosophers) for an ideal of society in which this should be otherwise, could not have been sensible. The sensibility could only arise in sequence upon that change in the actual structure of society through which the human person, as such, without distinction of sex, became the subject of rights."[1] Thus we have here, not merely an extension of the range of the virtue, but also a deeper conception of the principle upon which it rests. And the same truth might be illustrated in the case of other virtues. The principle of the virtues, in fact, becomes universalized, and ceases to attach itself simply to this or that particular mode of manifestation. And along with this universalization there comes a deeper consciousness of the inwardness of the virtuous life. So long as the virtues are connected only with particular modes of manifestation in social life (*e. g.* courage with the activities of war), they seem to be little more than outer facts. When, on the other hand, we see that the essence of the virtues consists in the application of a certain principle, whatever may be the sphere in which it is applied, we recognize at the same time that their essence lies rather in the attitude of the individual heart than in the particular forms of outward action. It is true that the Greeks were by no means ignorant of this essentially inward character of the virtues. They knew—*i. e.* their best thinkers knew—that the virtues are not virtues at all unless they are accompanied with purity of heart and will, unless they are done τοῦ καλοῦ ἕνεκα, for the sake of what is beautiful or noble. But the recognition of this has been very much deepened[2] by

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 288.

[2] It seems to me that Green somewhat exaggerates the unity of sentiment on this point in the Greek and Christian moral consciousness, *Ibid.*, p. 271 *seq.*, p. 288, &c. But no doubt there is greater danger in unduly emphasizing the divergence between them.

the growth of a clearer consciousness of the universality of the principles on which the virtues rest.

§ 6. NEW OBLIGATIONS.—In the preceding section we have seen that the deepening of the conception of the principle on which the virtues rest is accompanied by an extension of the sphere of their application. The expansion of our ideas of obligation which takes place in this way is of a comparatively simple kind. We learn to recognize that what applies to the Greek applies equally to the Barbarian, that what applies to the Jew applies equally to the Gentile, that what applies to men applies equally to women. But along with this expansion there is another of a less simple kind, by which we become aware of obligations that present themselves to our minds as *new* rather than as mere extensions of the old ones. Thus, when the Christian conception of man's nature and destiny was introduced, it seemed to bring with it an obligation of propagandism which had not been felt in the same way before. The recognition of the infinite issues at stake in the moral regeneration of mankind, and of the interest in these issues which belongs to every individual soul, rendered it an imperative obligation on those who accepted the Christian doctrine to endeavour, to the utmost of their power, to "preach the Gospel to every creature." On the other hand, the knowledge which has been subsequently acquired of the gradual way in which the moral nature develops, has modified the obligation of preaching, and transformed it into the obligation to make intellectual and moral education universally accessible. Again, the knowledge that has recently been acquired of the relation between men and animals has led to a transformation of our view with regard to the way in which the latter ought to be treated. It would be going somewhat too far to describe this transformation by saying that we have extended to the

lower animals the same conception of rights and obligations as we apply to men. In the case of some of the lower animals any such extension would be generally regarded as absurd; and even with respect to the highest of them, unless we allow that they are self-conscious, rational beings, with a moral life like that of man (which even their best friends scarcely claim for them), we cannot acknowledge that they possess rights, in any strict interpretation of the term. All that we seem entitled to say is, that we have begun to recognize that the animal consciousness has a certain kinship with our own, that we can discover in it traces of feelings, perceptions, and instincts that appear to be on the way towards the development of a moral life, and that consequently we feel bound to treat the animals, at least in their higher forms, in a way that is semi-human—in a way approximating to that in which we treat children, in whom also the moral consciousness, to which rights attach, is not fully developed.[1] But the acknowledgment of our relationship has, in recent times, extended even further than this. Even with inanimate nature we have begun to recognize a certain kinship; and this has given rise in some minds to a more or less vague sentiment that even natural scenery possesses a certain *quasi*-right to exist, and ought not to be wantonly outraged.

In noticing such extensions of our obligations as these, it ought not to be denied that there are also some obligations of which we are apt to lose the consciousness. Thus, it has often been pointed out that, in more primitive times, the consciousness of the mutual obligations of master and

[1] I need hardly say that I do not intend this passage to be taken as a complete discussion of this difficult question. The *quasi*-rights of children, for instance, must differ widely from those of the lower animals, inasmuch as the former are actually on the way to become rational, whereas the latter are not.

servant was much stronger than it is now. This must be fully admitted. At the same time it should be remembered that this partial obliteration of the consciousness of a duty is partly due to an extension of the sphere within which our obligations hold. The intensity of the personal relationship between master and servant (which, however, is often greatly exaggerated) was due in part to the fact that no human obligation was acknowledged except what was due to that particular relationship. The servant was supposed to owe a debt of gratitude to his master for the protection and patronage vouchsafed to him.[1] The obligation recognized on the side of the master was, I am afraid, generally of a much vaguer character. Now, on the other hand, we recognize the obligation of man to man, as such, independently of any special relationships. That this recognition of a wider sphere of duty has practically weakened the narrower ties, seems to be partly true. It is always more difficult to act up to the requirements of a large obligation than to those of a small one. But this ought not to prevent us from perceiving that there has been a great extension of the sphere of acknowledged duty.

§ 7. MORAL CHANGE AND CHANGE OF ENVIRONMENT.—The question is sometimes raised[2] whether the extension which thus takes place in our view of moral obligation is in reality due to a development of our moral consciousness, or only to a change in our environment. Thus, it may be urged that the emancipation of slaves[3] in modern times may be accounted for by the general development of our industrial methods; and it may be suggested that the attempt to rest

[1] *Cf.* Buckle's *History of Civilization*, Vol. III., p. 325. See also above, pp. 184 and 222, *note* 2.

[2] *Cf.* Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, p. 229 *seq.*

[3] *Cf.* Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Book III., chap. ii.

the movement in this direction on general considerations of the rights of men is merely an illustration of the cant and hypocrisy of the modern age. Now it seems clear that the general recognition of the possibility of abolishing slavery (which Aristotle could not acknowledge), and with this the recognition of the duty of actually abolishing it, was really due to the development of economic conditions. And a similar remark would apply in most other cases in which an extension of recognized obligations occurs. It is so, for instance, also with the movement towards the emancipation of women. New industrial conditions have pushed forward the demand for it. But this fact need not in any way stumble us, or make us hesitate the more to believe that there is a moral advance. Doubtless the moral life does not grow up *in vacuo*. It is relative throughout to the environment in which it is nurtured. It grows by the increase of our knowledge, by the increase of our power, by the increase of the possibilities of our action. The moral life is thus constantly being determined anew by the new conditions and combinations presented for solution, and by the new directions in which possible solutions appear.[1] But its growth is not therefore the less real. Those who know anything of the spirit in which the emancipation of the slaves was carried out, must be well aware that, however true it may be that industrial conditions made it possible, that industrial conditions first brought it to men's minds, and first won for it a general acceptance, however true it may even be that commercial and merely political motives weighed most strongly with the rank and file of those who fought for its accomplishment,

[1] The spirit of man "makes contemporary life the object on which it acts; itself being the infinite impulse of activity to alter its forms." Hegel's *Philosophy of History* (English translation), p. 215.

yet the inspiration of the great leaders of the movement, without which the necessary self-sacrifice would never have been undergone, was at bottom purely moral. Mere external changes may bring the need of a moral reform to light; but it is only in so far as they thus serve to awaken a moral consciousness that the world is moved by them.

§ 8. THE IDEAL UNIVERSE.—The fact of moral progress causes it to be not entirely true that the good man, and especially the moral genius (who is generally at the same time a moral reformer), lives within a universe constituted by actually existing habits and institutions, or even by ideals that are definitely acknowledged at a given time and place. What is said of Abraham may be applied to the moral life generally. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. . . . For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." The spirit of man, in its moral growth, looks continually for such a city.[1] It is continually "moving about in worlds not realized." It is dissatisfied with the habits and institutions actually established at any time and place, and even with the ideals that are customarily recognized, and presses forward towards a form of life that shall be more complete, consistent, and satisfying.[2] Hence the perennial interest of Utopias and

[1] *Cf.* the striking poem by Dr. Felix Adler, entitled *The Golden City.*

[2] "That which gives life its keynote is, not what men think good, but what they think best. True, this is not the part of belief which is embodied in conduct: the ordinary man tries to avoid only what is obviously wrong; the best of men does not always make us aware that he is striving after what is right. We do not see people growing into the resemblance of what they admire; it is much if we can see them growing into the unlikeness of that which they condemn. But the dominant influence of life lies ever in the unrealized. While all that

poetic dreams and anticipations of better modes of existence. Hence the recognition, by many of the best and profoundest among men, that they are but as strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Hence also the pessimism and despair which often cloud the consciousness of such men, so long as they see only the imperfection and incompleteness of all actual achievement in the moral life, and have not yet attained to any Pisgah-sight of something better that may be reached by them. Hence also the partial truth of Carlyle's opinion, that all true greatness is melancholy.

The recognition, however, of this moral faith, this presence of the consciousness of an unattained and even unformulated ideal, leads us at once into the region of poetry and religion; and as the highest forms of morality lead inevitably into these realms, it may be fitting to conclude our present treatment of Ethics with two chapters on the way in which the moral life is affected by such aspirations.[1]

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we discern is the negative aspect of a man's ideal, that ideal itself lives by admiration which never clothes itself in word or deed. In seeing what he avoids we judge only the least important part of his standard; it is that which he never strives to realize in his own person which makes him what he is. The average, secular man of to-day is a different being because Christendom has hallowed the precept to give the cloak to him who asks the coat; it would be easier to argue that this claim for what most would call an impossible virtue has been injurious than that it has been impotent. Christianity has moulded character where we should vainly seek to discern that it has influenced conduct. *Not the criminal code, but the counsel of perfection shows us what a nation is becoming;* and he who casts on any set of duties the shadow of the *second best*, so far as he is successful, does more to influence the moral ideal than he who succeeds in passing a new law." These profound remarks are taken from Miss Wedgwood's work on *The Moral Ideal* (p. 373). The italics are mine.

[1] The whole subject of the present chapter is most admirably treated in Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, Book V.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RELATION OF ART TO ETHICS.

"Gutes aus Gutem, das kann jedweder Verständige bilden;
Aber der Genius ruft Gutes aus Schlechtem hervor."[1]—SCHILLER.

§ 1. TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND GOODNESS.—The fact that the moral life is, as we have just seen, so largely determined by ideals or "counsels of perfection," leads us naturally to consider the general relation between morality and those ideals which are made real for us in the Fine Arts. Indeed, in many points in our treatment of Ethics, we have found it necessary to refer to its connection with Æsthetics; and it seems desirable that we should now bring together what has to be said on this point, though to discuss the subject with any fulness would evidently be beyond the scope of such a handbook as this.

At a first glance, Truth, Beauty, and Goodness strike us as three independent and absolute ends for man. They are the three objects that we seem to value for their own sakes, and not merely, like economic goods, as *means* of our welfare. Evidently they connect themselves with what are commonly said to be the three elements or aspects of our mental life; Truth being that which gives completeness to the knowing side of our nature, Beauty to the feeling side, and Goodness to the side of will. But just as these

[1] ("Good out of Good each sensible man can easily fashion;
The Man of Genius calls Good out of Evil to light.")

three sides of our consciousness are in the end inseparable from each other, so the three objects that give them their content must ultimately be conceived as having a certain unity. Now, the relation between Truth and Goodness has already, to some extent, become clear to us. We have seen[1] that Ethics may be regarded as a kind of Logic, connecting itself in the closest way with what is known as Transcendental Logic. It is the aim of this latter science to investigate the elements that are involved in the systematic knowledge of a world. Now such systematic knowledge is what we ultimately mean by Truth. Merely to know things as they present themselves to our senses is not to know them truly. To know them truly means to *understand* them; and this implies that we see them in connection with the system of things to which they belong. This objective system of things constitutes, as we may say, the highest intellectual universe; and it is the chief aim of the man of science and the philosopher to live habitually, as far as possible, within this universe. But the good man also seeks to "walk in the truth"; he also seeks to live habitually within the highest universe. The general point of view of the philosopher and of the good man is the same; the difference is merely that between contemplation and practice. The philosopher asks—Within the highest universe (*i. e.* the universe of rational insight), what is to be believed? The good man asks rather—What must my conduct be, in order that the highest universe may, as far as possible, be realized? Now, so long as neither of these questions is fully answered (and within the limits of human life neither of them ever *can* be fully answered), the two attitudes of mind implied in asking them may be distinguished. But in the last resort they are inseparable.

[1] Above, pp. 26-7, 65-6, 137-8.

Neither of the two questions could be answered fully without the other being answered along with it; and even the interest which impels us to ask the one question is fundamentally identical with the interest which impels us to ask the other—*viz.*, the interest in the realization of the highest self.

It is perhaps natural that we should consider the relation of Goodness to Truth before considering its relation to Beauty. As Ethics is a science, its relation to other sciences, and consequently to Truth in general, is naturally one of the first things into which we inquire. When, however, we pass, as we have now passed, from the consideration of the fundamental questions of ethical science to the consideration of the moral life in its concrete development, the relation of Goodness to Beauty becomes even more impressive than its relation to Truth. Perhaps, indeed, its relationship to Beauty is somewhat more difficult to trace, just because Beauty is not an object of intellectual apprehension in the same way as Truth is. For this reason, if for no other, all that is here said about the relationship between Beauty and Goodness must be regarded as merely provisional and tentative.

§ 2. ETHICS AND ÆSTHETICS.—It is evident that the satisfaction which we derive from the contemplation of a good action or of an excellent character is closely akin to the satisfaction which we derive from the sight of a beautiful object. This kinship, as we have seen, is recognized in such expressions as "the beauty of holiness," "a beautiful soul," "a beautiful life"; and in the fact that the Greeks used the expression τὸ καλόν indifferently for beauty or for moral excellence.[1] Yet it seems

[1] This is forcibly brought out, for instance, in the Stoic maxim, ὅτι μόνον ἀγαθὸν τὸ καλόν ("that only the beautiful, *i.e.* the morally excellent,

clear that moral excellence cannot be regarded as simply a particular case of beauty. Wherein, then, does the difference lie? It would obviously be but a superficial answer to say that the æsthetic consciousness deals with what is immediately given in sense, whereas the moral consciousness is concerned with reflection. Much of what we regard as beautiful is not sensuous—*e. g.* the beauty of a Greek tragedy. Often also the beauty is not directly apparent, but requires a certain amount of reflection. The natural man is not satisfied, for instance, with the play of *King Lear*. He would prefer to give it a happy ending. The æsthetic consciousness which perceives the inevitableness of the tragic close, and pronounces the artistic whole to be beautiful, seems to involve reflection quite as truly as does the moral consciousness which declares the life of St. Paul to be noble. The distinction appears rather to consist in this. In the case of the artistic judgment we consider the object that is presented to us simply in itself. In this sense the artistic judgment may be said to be immediate. In the moral judgment, on the other hand, we consider the object in relation to an end beyond itself. A moral action or character will fail to be beautiful in proportion as the end which it subserves is distant or concealed. Such a character as that of the apostle Paul may be beauti-

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is good"). *Cf.* also the saying of Ruskin—"Taste is not only a part and an index of morality; it is the *only* morality. The first and last and closest trial question to any living creature is, 'What do you like? Tell me what you like, and I will tell you what you are'" (*Sesame and Lilies*). See also Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part IV., sect. II. The philosopher in the present century who has most strongly insisted on the identity of Goodness with Beauty is Herbart. He definitely treated Ethics as a part of Æsthetics. See, for instance, his *Science of Education*, recently translated by Mr. and Mrs. Felkin; and *cf.* Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetic*, p. 369.

ful as well as noble, because the end to which it is directed is apparent throughout its course. In order that a moral character may be beautiful, it is necessary that it should have a certain completeness. Such a life as that of Goethe is beautiful as well as noble, because the ends to which it is directed are actually achieved within its compass. A striking illustration of this condition is afforded by the fact that Aristotle, looking at the moral life with the artistic eye of a Greek, is inclined to demand that it should have a certain completeness.[1] He recognizes indeed that even a life that is disturbed by great misfortunes, may be so distinguished by moral energy that the nobility of it "shines through"[2]; but he considers that the perfection of the life is necessarily marred if the misfortunes are, like Priam's, too numerous or weighty.[3] The life of a mediæval Christian, on the other hand, was apt to have a certain relative want of beauty, on account of the fact that its end lies in a far-off world. But the life of a martyr may be beautiful, if it is directed in a single-hearted way to the attainment of a noble object; because in that case the relation of the actions to their end is apparent throughout.[4] On the whole, then, we must consider that there is a fundamental difference between the ethical and the æsthetical point of view, in spite of their close relation to one another; and that this difference may be briefly expressed by saying that the æsthetical point of view has more immediacy. At the same time, it seems clear that if the moral life could be viewed in its entirety, with its end made clearly apparent, it would

1 "Ἐν βίῳ τελείῳ" (*Ethics*, I. vii. 16).

2 "Διαλάμπει τὸ καλόν" (*Ibid.*, I. x. 12).

3 *Ibid.*, 14.

4 See on this point Prof. Ker's article on "The Philosophy of Art" in *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, p. 158 *sqq.*

be seen to be beautiful. But it cannot as a rule be thus immediately presented; and consequently the belief that goodness is beautiful, like the belief that "beauty is truth, truth beauty," remains of the nature of faith rather than of actual knowledge; and indeed it is a faith which is essentially identical with religious faith.[1]

§ 3. THE CONNECTION OF ART WITH MORALS.—We see, however, that the relation of art to Ethics is a very close one. This relation, regarded from a practical point of view, may be said to have a twofold aspect. On the one hand, art serves as a preparation for the moral life; on the other hand, it may be said to carry us beyond the moral life. It educates for the moral life, in so far as it helps to develop that excellence of taste and fineness of feeling which are the basis of all genuine morality. But the devotees of art rightly[2] resent the idea that art is simply to be regarded as a means of moral culture. In a sense it carries us above morality. "The beautiful," Goethe said, "is higher than the good: it includes the good within it"—a doctrine which even the austerity of Carlyle acknowledges to contain an element of truth. Artistic beauty, at least, suggests a sphere of harmony in which the struggles and contradictions of the moral life are brought to rest. It points to higher ideals than those that are attainable in the actual world. These two sides of the influence of art are not really separable from one another; for it is chiefly by pointing to such ideals that art educates the moral sense. Still, it seems well to regard it as fulfilling these two distinct functions—preparing

[1] See next chapter.

[2] Within certain limits. This statement is qualified by what follows. The doctrine of "Art for Art's sake" appears to be essentially shallow. *Cf.* Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetic*, p. 457; and see below, pp. 310-11.

us for the moral conflict, and raising us above it. In both these aspects art is closely akin to religion.

§ 4. THE EDUCATIVE INFLUENCE OF ART.—Fletcher's saying is well known: "Let me make the songs of a people, and whoever likes may make the laws." This saying expresses the confidence that a people's actions will ultimately depend on the character that is developed in them, rather than on mere mechanical institutions; and that popular poetry is a potent factor in the formation of character. This confidence is no doubt well justified; and what is true of popular poetry is true also to a large extent of all forms of art. The art of a people, like its language, both expresses its character and helps to form it. It does this by forming the taste; and, as Mr. Ruskin is fond of insisting, good taste is the essence of morality.[1] The man who has been trained to love the highest beauty can scarcely act in a manner that is common or mean. Plato recognized this in a striking way, and proposed that in his ideal state the earliest moral training should be given in the form of art.[2] He thought that fair sights and beautiful sounds would serve, more than anything else, to instil noble ideas, and prepare the minds of his citizens for right social action. At the same time, Plato was well aware that the love of beautiful ideals is only a part of the moral life. Morality is a matter of the *will*, and the mere study of art does not suffice for the training of this. Indeed the contemplation of beauty tends rather to weaken the will, by accustoming us to an attitude of passive enjoyment instead of active struggle, by leaving us satisfied with fine dreams instead of achievements.[3] Hence Plato considered that a man

[1] See above, p. 285, *note*. [2] *Republic*, Book III.

[3] Perhaps this applies in some degree even to the highest forms of art. *Cf.* below, p. 301, *note* 1.

might easily be "too musical," and that it was necessary to supplement the education of art by more strenuous pursuits.

§ 5. Antagonism between Art and Morals.—Indeed, it must be confessed that there is a certain paradox in representing art as a great preparation for the moral life. Poets and artists are not generally supposed to be conspicuous for the excellence of their conduct. Benvenuto Cellini is apt to be taken as a type of artists; and modern criminologists class them with the insane. Their lives are often marred by passion and by indifference to conventional rules. This, however, is partly due to the fact already indicated, that the artistic life does not tend to strengthen the will.[1] It may partly also be explained by saying that in many cases the rules of morality to which the artist is indifferent are only conventional rules. Respectability is certainly not the same thing as moral goodness. The life of a poet or artist is somewhat abnormal. The fixing of his attention on ideals is apt to make him somewhat indifferent to the more ordinary duties of life. But it does not follow from this that his life is not rendered nobler by his art—still less that his art does not tend to ennoble the lives of others.

Apart, however, from the life of the artist himself, it is often thought that the tendency of art is in some directions rather hostile to morality. At any rate, the artist generally

[1] Even Herbart recognized this. "That high degree of success of individual activities," he says (*Science of Education*, p. 217), "which characterizes a special genius, is in no way favourable to the formation of character. For genius depends too much on varying moods to permit of memory of the will; it is not at its own command. The moods of the artist do not constitute character. Besides, an artist's occupations lie always in far too remote a corner of human life and creation to permit of the whole man ruling himself therefrom."

resents the idea that he ought to be directly a teacher of morals. He would regard this, and rightly, as treason to his art. And sometimes it appears as if his art did not even indirectly convey any moral lesson, but in some instances had rather an immoral tendency. The true artist feels that "beauty is its own excuse for being," and is apt to ask indignantly—

"Is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?"

From the side of the ethical teacher also, the morality of art is frequently called in question. Thus Plato, in spite of his recognition of the great service which art is capable of rendering to the moral life, yet passes severe criticisms on the music and poetry of his time, as being calculated rather to pervert than to improve the lives of the citizens.

Now this possibility of an antagonism between the artistic and the moral point of view must be partly admitted. The artist seeks an immediate harmony, and this harmony may not always be compatible with that deeper one which is reached through moral conflict. The artist may reach beauty by deliberately throwing a veil over the ugliness of life: he may confer delight by concealing what is disagreeable. And even without any deliberate concealment, we have already admitted that moral action is not always directly beautiful, or immoral always ugly.[1] In order that beauty and goodness should be seen always to coincide, it would be necessary to see life as a whole, and this we can never do.

It must be admitted, therefore, that poetry, and art generally, is not exactly what Matthew Arnold called it, "a criticism of life." It criticizes life in so far as it suggests

[1] Thus, the life of such a man as Cæsar Borgia has been said to be "beautiful as a tempest or as an abyss."

to us ideals that are more beautiful than the actual world; but it does not follow that because they appear more beautiful, even to a fairly well developed taste, they are therefore also better. Life may indeed be a criticism of art, as well as art of life. Even the best art is but a poor expression of the beauty of the deepest reality;[1] and this deepest beauty is a refined and subtle essence which we very slowly learn to see and to appreciate.

§ 6. THE INNER MORALITY OF ART.—But after these admissions have been made, it remains true that art is a teacher of morals. The objection to regarding it in this light arises chiefly from a confusion between unconscious moral influence and conscious didacticism. Didactic art is certainly the lowest form of art; but the reason of this is chiefly that moral lessons which are capable of being directly taught are either too obvious to require any special art for their inculcation, or else are too narrow to be beautiful. What art can communicate is not particular moral lessons, but rather the moral spirit.[2] Great art is unconscious of any aim beyond the representation of beauty; but at the same time it is true of all great artists, as Emerson said of the constructors of the cathedrals, that "they builded better than they knew." Their work contains suggestions of moral truths of which, it may be, they themselves were quite unaware.

Of course we are here referring to *great* works of art. In inferior art it is often difficult to find moral inspiration.

[1] *Cf.* Bacon's Essay "Of Beauty." "That is the best part of beauty, which a picture cannot express: no, nor the first sight of the life."

[2] *Cf.* Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetic*, p. 291, *note* 2, where the opinion of Schiller is referred to, "that beauty *only* changes man's whole nature to a free rational or second nature, but 'discovers no *single* truth, helps us to fulfil no *single* duty.'" The same might almost be said of Ethics. *Cf.* above, p. 209.

But this is largely because it is bad art. If some of the inferior British dramatists have rather a corrupting than an ennobling influence, we may correct their tendencies by turning to Shakspere, Æschylus, Sophocles, or Molière. And even with regard to inferior forms of art, it should be added that those who extract immoral influences from them, or even who fail to extract moral influences from them, are in general not regarding them as art—*i. e.* are not conscious of their beauty. Even a great work of art may have an immoral effect on a man who does not really feel its beauty: but for such a man it is not art. Beauty is necessarily moralizing; and in this sense we must maintain that there is a moral even in the rose.[1] No one can have a real appreciation of beautiful objects, and yet consent that his own life should be ugly. Of course his appreciation of beauty may be narrow, and consequently may not influence his whole life; but in so far as he is a lover of harmony, he must be shamed by any discord in his own conduct. Still of course we must admit that this shame may be very ineffective. It may not produce any change in the will.

It must be allowed, however, that the moral influence of art to which we are now referring is of a very indirect character. We pass, in fact, at this point, from the consideration of art as an education to the consideration of it as the creator of ideals that carry us in a sense beyond the moral life altogether. These ideals react upon the moral life; but in themselves they are rather suggestive of a higher harmony which we may not be able to realize.

§ 7. IDEALS OF LIFE.—We have already seen[2] what an important part the study of ideals may play in the

[1] *Cf.* Caird's *Essays on Literature and Philosophy*, Vol. I., p. 153.
[2] Above, p. 234.

development of the moral life. Art is largely occupied with the creation of such ideals. It was from this point of view that Plato criticized the poetry of his time. He considered that the ideals which it set up were morally defective, and he proposed to reform poetry by getting it to depict nothing but the noblest characters. There was a certain absurdity in this, and no doubt a certain amount of intentional humour. The freedom of the poet cannot be interfered with in this summary way; and it may often be necessary for artistic purposes to depict a Falstaff, an Iago, or a Cleopatra. Nevertheless, it remains true that in the main great art is concerned with the portrayal of noble characters and heroic acts. It is not always the case, however, that these noble characters can be regarded as direct models for our imitation. They are sometimes, as in Homer, gods or heroes of more than mortal powers, or, as in Spenser, they live under conditions very remote from those of actual existence. Such ideals do not serve as a direct education of character, but rather delight us by placing before us a kind of life in which the defects and limitations under which our moral life is conducted are removed. Nevertheless, such a presentation of ideals is still, in the best sense, a criticism of life. It sends us back discontented with our narrow lives,[1] but at the same time

[1] *Cf.* what Browning says of the student who

"Trims his lamp,
Opens his Plutarch, puts him in the place
Of Roman, Grecian; draws the patched gown close,
Dreams, 'Thus should I fight, save or rule the world!'—
Then smilingly, contentedly, awakes
To the old solitary nothingness."

Such dreams, however, will generally have an ennobling effect even on the solitary nothingness.

with higher hopes of the possibilities that may be realized even there.

§ 8. IDEALS OF SOCIETY.—The poet and artist delight not merely to create ideal types of character, but also to place them in an ideal environment, and in ideal relations to one another. Thus they suggest not merely ideals for the moral life of the individual, but also social ideals. The ideals of chivalry, for instance, are to a large extent poetic creations; and to the same general class belong what are called Utopias, ranging from Plato's *Republic* to William Morris's *News from Nowhere*. It is practically only in poetry (or in prose fiction) that such portraitures are possible; but painting also and even music may be used to suggest conditions of ideal simplicity and happiness. The artist who depicts such social ideals has generally a more conscious aim at moral improvement than the artist who depicts personal ideals. Such artists, in fact (as in the case of Plato, More, William Morris, and others), approximate to the character of prophets; and their art tends to have a semi-religious earnestness of tone.

§ 9. NON-MORAL IDEALS.—Often, however, in giving us pictures of pastoral felicity, the poet or painter has no conscious moral intent. Sometimes, indeed, the life which he depicts has no obvious moral superiority to the actual life around us, and pleases us more only on account of its greater simplicity and peace. Again, the ideals depicted by poets and artists are often of an impersonal character. They give us pictures or descriptions of sky, sea, and mountain, partly taken from nature in her more impressive moments, but generally adding to the natural presentation what Wordsworth describes as

> "The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration and the poet's dream."

Even such ideals as this are not without moral significance. They suggest that harmony and peace after which, for the most part, we vainly strive. They serve also to elevate and expand our universe[1]; and, when the art is of the highest quality, raise us to a religious point of view. This is the case notably with such poets as Wordsworth and Shelley in their treatment of nature.

§ **10.** Realism and Idealism in Art.—It may be objected to what we have just been saying that it all presupposes that it is the function of the artist to idealize; whereas, according to some recent views, the greatest artists are those who simply "hold the mirror up to nature." We cannot here discuss the extent to which this is true of the highest art; but a few remarks may suffice to bring out its bearing on the moral side of art. In the first place, we may remark that the upholders of realism in art seem frequently to have in their minds two distinct ideas. One is that the artist ought simply to copy nature, making her neither better nor worse than she actually is. The other is that the artist ought to avoid idealizing nature, and rather give special prominence to what is evil. Realism in fiction seems to be generally understood in the latter sense. Now, without either committing ourselves to one or other of these views or endeavouring to refute them, we may allow at least that they contain a certain element of truth; but this element of truth in no way militates against anything that we have been here main-

[1] Hence, as Toynbee noted (*Industrial Revolution*, p. 254): "The sense of beauty is the greatest restraint upon fanaticism." It prevents us from being satisfied with a narrow and incomplete universe. The sense of humour—which is, as it were, the inverse of the sense of beauty—has a similar effect. The deepest kind of humour seems to be a sense of a fundamental deformity, coupled with the consciousness that this deformity is, as it were, embraced by a deeper harmony, which it cannot destroy, but which it rather brings out and enhances.

taining. It is true that the greatest art must keep close to nature: but the chief reason seems to be that, but for this, it could not furnish us with ideals that would yield us any permanent satisfaction. An ideal which was a mere dream, entirely divorced from fact, could not yield any inspiration in our conduct in the midst of actualities. It is in this sense that life is a criticism of art. Pure idealism in art is discredited, because it will not stand the test of contact with real life. The highest idealism is that which is able to take up the commonest facts of ordinary experience and show an ideal significance shining through them. Such an idealism evidently does not simply copy nature;

> "It looks at all things as they are,
> But through a kind of glory."

It at least selects the choicest moments in nature, if it does no more. It also selects as a rule the most significant combinations.[1] In this way at least it idealizes. Again, it is true that the highest art not only keeps close to nature, but sometimes shows almost a preference for what is evil in nature. The explanations of this are various[2]; but none of them seems to be in any way incompatible with the moral idealism of art. Evil is a favourite material for art chiefly because it is only in conflict with evil that the highest good comes out. An optimism which shrinks from evil is at once felt to be unsatisfactory. We encounter evil at every turn in the actual world; and any idealism that is to be finally

[1] *Cf.* what is said by Mr. Bosanquet on the "characteristic" in art. *History of Æsthetic*, pp. 6-7, 448—451, &c.

[2] There are some suggestive remarks on this point in a recent pamphlet by Franz Brentano on "Das Schlechte als Gegenstand dichterischer Darstellung." See also, for discussions on the ugly in art, Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetic*, p. 395 *sqq.*, and several other passages.

satisfactory must recognize this in its extremest form, and yet be able to show that there is "some soul of goodness" in it which is stronger than the evil. It must, so to speak, descend into Hell and lead captivity captive. It is here that the great strength of such an optimistic poetry as that of Browning lies.[1] His faith in the good co-exists with a perfect, and indeed one might almost say, exaggerated recognition of evil. Sometimes indeed we find in works of art very little evidence of any recognition of a good that is deeper than the evil depicted. Shakspere's *Timon of Athens* or *Troilus and Cressida* might be taken as examples; and indeed even in his greater dramas and in the great Greek tragedies the same is sometimes in a lesser degree true. Yet even in these cases despair is never the last word of art. The mere selection of evil as a subject for poetic treatment indicates a certain faith in the poet that the evil is not so bad as it seems. "Melodious tears" are not the tears of despair. It is inevitable that in the poetic treatment of evil some hint at least should appear that after all there is some beauty behind the ugliness. Otherwise the treatment would cease to be artistic, as indeed in some "realistic" productions it appears to do.[2] We seem to be

[1] See Jones's *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, especially chaps. iv. and v.

[2] *Cf.* Caird's *Essays on Literature and Philosophy*, pp. 61-62. "Art must in a sense be joyous; if it is not to fall beneath its idea, it must at least return in its final note to joy. If it admits the tragic contrasts of life, it must not lose itself in them; it must carry us beyond 'fear and terror,' even if it has to carry us through them. It must not leave us victims of such passions without a reconciling atonement, which makes us accept the event, not merely as an inevitable fate, but as an issue in which the dramatic evolution of character has brought about *its own* destiny. Thus, even when it goes beyond the first and simplest theme of poetic imagination, and ceases to be an expression of man's joy in the response of nature to the demands of his spirit, it must restore

justified in concluding, then, that art, in so far as it is real art, necessarily supplies us with ideals, though it may be only in the way of indirect hint and suggestion; and these ideals always serve, in so far as they are truly artistic, as a certain inspiration to the moral life.

§ 11. RELATION BETWEEN BEAUTY AND GOODNESS.—What has now been said on the way in which the moral life is affected by art, may suffice to lead us up to a general consideration of the relation of Beauty to Goodness.

Beauty, we may say, is that which gives us an immediate pleasure as a direct object of thought.[1] This statement,

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the broken harmony by giving us, even in the utmost tragic catastrophe, the sense of the realization of a law, in which we are more deeply interested than even in the sorrows and joys of the individual. If, on the contrary, a poem throws us back upon ourselves, jarred and untuned, as by a consciousness of inexplicable accident or meaningless sorrow, or if it leaves us strained with a vacant longing for we know not what, we may safely say that we have been cheated by a false semblance of art, or at best by an art which wilfully seeks to destroy the sources of its own power. For contradiction, division, external limitation are the prose of life; and art is art, poetry is poetry, only as it disentangles, unites, and reconciles, giving us, if not the open vision, at least the presentiment or 'Ahnung' of the unity which is beneath and beyond it."

[1] Mr. Bosanquet objects (*History of Æsthetic*, p. 6) to the inclusion of the quality of pleasantness in the definition of Beauty. "Things give pleasure," he says, "sometimes because they are beautiful, and sometimes for other reasons. They are not beautiful simply because they give pleasure, but only in so far as they give æsthetic pleasure; and the nature of the presentation that gives æsthetic pleasure is the matter to be ascertained." This is true; but it does not seem to me to be true that anything gives us an *immediate* pleasure as a *direct* object of thought, except for the reason that it is beautiful. Things sometimes give us pleasure in an indirect way, because they bring with them agreeable associations, or because we expect that they will lead to something that is in itself agreeable. Again, some mere *sensations* are pleasant. But these are not objects of thought at all. I cannot think

however, requires some qualification. What gives immediate pleasure to one person may not give the same to another. To an uncultured mind the reading of a Greek tragedy would give but little pleasure; and even the pleasure given to such a mind by a play of Shakspere would probably not be an immediate pleasure given by the object itself. Yet men are more and more coming to hold that beauty and ugliness are not mere matters of individual taste, but have a certain objective reality. In judging of Beauty, in fact, just as in judging of Truth or Goodness, we do not take the consciousness of any given individual as the standard, but rather refer to the highest universe that we know. We do not consider that to be in the highest sense beautiful which merely gives an immediate pleasure to the natural man, but only that which would give an immediate pleasure to the man who had attained to the point of view of rational insight. If this were quite strictly interpreted, the point of view from which we judge of Beauty would be absolutely identified with that from which we judge of Truth and Goodness; so that we might say with the Stoics, *ὅτι μόνον ἀγαθὸν τὸ καλόν*, or with Keats, "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty." But if we were to interpret in this strict sense, it would be impossible for us, in our present undeveloped state, to have any judgment of Beauty whatever. What we generally do is rather to distinguish higher and lower kinds of Beauty. What satisfies the taste of the child or of the undeveloped man, we regard as beautiful in a lower sense; while the highest forms of Beauty—especially what we call the "Sublime"—not only satisfy the most developed taste,

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of anything which is an object of thought, and of which the presentation gives an immediate pleasure, which is not also beautiful. Such an object, indeed, seems to me to be what we *mean* by a beautiful object—though subject to the qualification made in the text above.

but haunt us with a suggestion of something higher and more beautiful than themselves.

So long, then, as we are not speaking of the absolute Beauty and the absolute Goodness, but only of Beauty and Goodness as we know them here and now, there is a clearly marked distinction between them. Goodness is the struggle towards the highest ideal universe ; whereas Beauty is found in an object that has in itself a relative harmony and completeness that gives a certain satisfaction to a well-developed mind. Looking at it in this way, we can easily understand why the goodness of an action or of a character is not necessarily proportionate to its Beauty. A "beautiful soul" must not enter too much into the struggles of the actual world: its beauty lies in its perfect harmony and adjustment within the sphere in which its life is passed. It must grow like a flower; and its actions must flow from it as if they were given by an inspiration.[1] The man of strenuous goodness, on the other hand—the active moral reformer—generally appears, at least relatively, as "without form or comeliness." Thus, to take recent examples, the life of a man like Emerson seems to impress us more with a sense of beauty than that of Carlyle or Browning, even if we recognize that, from a moral point of view, the latter writers have struggled at least as earnestly with the problems of life. Beauty is a realization, whereas Goodness is a struggle.[2]

[1] *Cf.* above, p. 30. See also Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetic*, p. 457, where he speaks of "the characteristic utterance that genuinely issues from the fulness of a man's heart" as being necessarily beautiful. Such an utterance (at least in action as distinguished from speech) can seldom be found in the struggle with complicated and refractory conditions where much reflection is required. Reflective morality lacks immediacy.

[2] "Poetic genius must live in fruition, not in aspiration—must be at peace and not at war with the world; it must be able to see good in the

Hence, Beauty is at once higher and lower than Goodness. It is higher, in as far as attainment is higher than effort. It is lower, in as far as the struggle towards perfection is higher than the satisfaction with any actual attainment. But this latter remark does not apply to the very highest kinds of Beauty; because these are a realization only in the sense that they contain a living presentment of an unattained ideal.[1] The greatest art, indeed, often contents itself simply with the clear and forcible statement of the ultimate problems of our existence; the beauty of it consisting simply in the conviction which such a presentation brings with it, that the problems in their last and sternest form must be on the verge of solution. It is thus that by a great "pity and terror" it "purges" us of our own more paltry fears.

The appreciation of this highest kind of Beauty is closely akin to religion; and to the consideration of this it is now time to pass.

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heart of evil, it must grasp as attained what others see only as a distant hope. The poet cannot be one who has had to trample upon his natural life in order to make room for moral freedom, or one who has lost the vividness of the sensuous present in order to grasp at an idea. He must remain at one with himself as in happy childhood, and maintain an unbroken life in spite of all fightings within and contradictions without. For if he does not, a false note will get into his song; it will become a wail for a lost past, a complaint against time and fortune, or an aspiration after the unattainable, instead of an echo of the divine word that 'all is good.'"—Caird's *Essays on Literature and Philosophy*, Vol. I., pp. 60-1.

[1] It must be allowed, however, that even very high ideals of Beauty are apt to present themselves as somewhat antagonistic to the work of the practical reformer. Thus, it is difficult entirely to justify the attitude of Goethe towards active reforms. Such a man as Mazzini or even Arndt could not but feel intensely repelled by it. *Cf.*, however, Appendix B, Note III.; and, for some further remarks on Art, see Note VI.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RELATION OF ETHICS TO RELIGION.

"All religion was here to remind us, better or worse, of what we already know better or worse, of the quite *infinite* difference there is between a Good man and a Bad; to bid us love infinitely the one, abhor and avoid infinitely the other,—strive infinitely to *be* the one, and not to be the other."—CARLYLE.

§ **1.** THE ETHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGION.—Matthew Arnold, as is well known, defined religion as "morality touched with emotion." "This," remarks Mr. Muirhead,[1] "does not carry us far. Emotion is not a distinctive mark of religious conduct. All conduct . . . is touched with emotion, otherwise it would not be conduct at all." This criticism is perhaps not entirely fair. All conduct is in a sense touched with emotion—*i. e.* it involves an element of feeling. So does all conscious life. But this need not prevent us from distinguishing between emotional and unemotional acts and states. In ordinary life the element of feeling is to all intents in abeyance. It influences us quietly, but does not rise into prominence. We do what is in harmony with our habits and convictions; we shun what is in discord with them: but our attention is not specially directed to the agreeableness of the one or the disagreeableness of the other. The one does not thrill us, and the other does not jar upon us or shock us. This is the case so long as we

[1] *Elements of Ethics*, p. 168.

are living steadily within the universe to which we have become habituated. And we are so living throughout the greater part of that conduct which we describe as moral. Even the saint or hero may perform saintly or heroic acts with no consciousness that he is doing anything particular. The more entirely he is absorbed in his work, the more likely is this to be the case. Still more is it the case that the "good neighbour" and the "honest citizen" go about their avocations, for the most part, with no particular stirrings of the breast. On the other hand, I think Matthew Arnold was so far in the right, that the religious attitude, as distinguished from the moral, is always characterized (as is also the artistic) by a strongly-marked emotion. Still, I agree with Mr. Muirhead in thinking that Matthew Arnold's definition is inadequate, and this for more reasons than one.

In the first place, although it seems an exaggeration to say that *all* conduct is in any special sense characterized by emotion, yet conduct is frequently emotional without being, in any ordinary sense of the term, religious. Conduct becomes emotional whenever our attention is strongly directed to some end, affected by our conduct, which we have come to regard as supremely important. Now this end may or may not be of such a kind as we ordinarily designate religious. In a hotly-contested political election, a man may perform his duty as a citizen under a strong emotional influence, which in some cases has been so powerful as to produce death. Yet we should scarcely say that his conduct is more religious than that of the good workman who carefully finishes his job, without feeling that anything particular is at stake. Or again, when one of the parents of a large family suddenly dies, leaving the whole responsibility on the shoulders of the other, the sense of

this new responsibility, in a conscientious person, will generally cause the ordinary duties of the family to be, for some time at least, performed with a keener feeling than before of the issues that are at stake. Yet we should scarcely say that it is thereby rendered more religious. Or again, when King David, according to the Biblical narrative, poured out the water that was brought to him, because it had been purchased at too dear a risk, his act was moral; he did it from a sense of duty; and we can scarcely doubt that it was accompanied by a keen emotion: but should we describe it as a specially religious act?[1] The truth is that the emotional quality of our actions depends largely on the question whether they are habitual acts, acts that belong to the ordinary universe within which we live, or whether we are rising into an unfamiliar universe. Now it may be readily granted that religion, in any real sense of the word, cannot be reduced to habit: it is always an uplifting of our souls, and consequently always involves emotion. But conduct may involve strong and deep emotion and yet not be specially religious.

But, in the second place, Matthew Arnold's definition seems to err not merely by including much which would not, in any ordinary sense, be regarded as religion, but also by excluding much which would naturally fall under that category. Some religions have scarcely any direct bearing on the moral life. Even the religion of the Greeks, one of the most beautiful and typical of all religions, was largely a worship of the powers of nature. Their gods were not

[1] In the actual narrative (1 *Chronicles*, xi. 18) a religious turn is given to the act by the statement that David "poured it out to the Lord." But the act would have been substantially the same, and might have had substantially the same emotional accompaniment, without this addition.

conspicuously respectable; and though in an indirect way they had an ennobling influence on Greek life, yet they were not consciously set up as models of moral conduct, nor did the worship of them involve any direct incitement to virtue. And the same is true of many other forms of religion.[1] It cannot, therefore, be said that religion is always to be regarded as immediately connected with the moral life.

§ 2. THE RELATION OF RELIGION TO ART.—The connection of religion with Ethics, in fact, appears to be very similar to the connection of art with Ethics; and we may understand the connection better by noticing the relation of art to religion. Carlyle was fond of reminding us of the connection between the terms "Worship" and "Worthship." What we worship is what we regard as having supreme worth or value. Religion, in short, like art, is concerned with ideals. But while the ideals of art are beautiful objects that yield an immediate satisfaction, the ideals of religion are rather objects that are regarded as having supreme and ultimate worth. In their immediate aspect they may have "no beauty that we should desire them." For the same reason the ideals of religion must be regarded as *true*. Art, aiming at an immediate satisfaction, may be partly dream. No doubt, if it is to be great art, it must keep close to reality; and even its most imaginative creations must express some inner truth in nature or in morals. Indeed, in its highest forms art approaches very closely to religion. But still it is never necessary that the creations

[1] *E.g.*, the Scandinavian. The religion of the Romans, on the other hand, was strongly moral (*cf.* Froude's *Cæsar*, p. 12). No doubt, even the Scandinavian and early German mythologies contained some strongly-marked ethical traits: *cf.* Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, sect. I., and Prof. Pfleiderer's article on "The National Traits of the Germans as seen in their Religion," in the *International Journal of Ethics* for October, 1892 (Vol. III., No. 1, pp. 2—7).

of art should be absolutely true. It is enough that they should be beautiful suggestions of truth. Even in the highest regions of art, such a work as Shakspere's *Tempest* has no literal truth. There are no Calibans or Ariels; nor is it necessary for our appreciation of the play that we should actually believe that there are any. We can feel the whole beauty of it, and yet be well aware that all the creations in it are "such stuff as dreams are made of." Religion, on the other hand, gives us ideals which are regarded as realities, and even as the most real of things. The Homeric gods, as depicted in the poems, are poetic creations; and there is no necessity for supposing them to be anything but dreams—*significant* dreams, no doubt, but still dreams. As worshipped by the Greek people, on the other hand, the gods were necessarily regarded as realities. Hegel, indeed, has contrasted the Greek with the Christian religion, by saying that the gods of the former were mere creations of the imagination.[1] This is partly true. The Greeks were an artistic much more than a religious people; and their gods never became, in any complete sense, definitely established objects of belief. But just to this extent they remained poetry rather than religion. So also in the Christian religion there are many mythical elements which have been made subjects of poetry and of various forms of artistic representation. We may admire the paintings of Jesus and of the Virgin, and feel an artistic pleasure in the contemplation of them, without believing that they are anything more than beautiful dreams.[2] But the man who takes Jesus as a supreme object

[1] See Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, p. 233.

[2] No doubt there are stages of human development at which the distinction here indicated is scarcely perceived. To the Greeks, for instance, Homer supplied poetry, philosophy, and religion all in one.

of worship necessarily regards him as real and as the greatest of realities.

§ **3.** THE NECESSITY OF RELIGION.—Religion, being thus akin to art, is related to Ethics in somewhat the same way as art is. It carries us, in a sense, beyond the moral life, by raising us to the idea of a sphere of attainment beyond the sphere of mere struggle. And this it does, not, like art, in the way of hint and suggestion, but rather in the way of definite conviction. Such convictions are a necessity of man's life—a necessity partly intellectual and partly moral.[1] Both on the intellectual and on the moral side this necessity may be said to arise from a consciousness of the incompleteness and inadequacy of our experience. On the purely intellectual side this presents itself as a feeling of wonder at the inexplicable in nature. Out of this wonder, as Plato taught, all science arises. But the imagination outruns science, and creates explanations for itself; and even after science has done its best, there remains a sense of unexplained mystery into which we still seek to press.

And so, no doubt, it was to some extent in the great ages of Mediæval art. At such periods the significance of art for a nation's life is much greater than it is after the three provinces have been more rigidly divided. "However excellent," says Hegel, "we think the statues of the Greek gods, however nobly and perfectly God the Father and Christ and Mary may be portrayed, it makes no difference, our knees no longer bend." See Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetic*, p. 344, and *cf.* Caird's *Hegel*, pp. 111-12. Of course, the clearer distinction in modern times between art and philosophy or religion need not in the end cause our art to be less perfect or less serious than that of the ancient world. For we may still recognize that art is the best expression of all that is deepest in philosophy and religion. But it is necessarily dethroned from its former unique position. Homer and Dante may have been treated as *authorities:* Shakspere and Goethe are regarded only as *exponents* and *illustrators*. But perhaps they have gained in breadth what they have lost in height. *Cf.* Bosanquet, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

[1] See Caird's *Philosophy of Religion*, chap. iv.

On the moral side, in like manner, there is a sense of inadequacy in our ordinary experience—a want of completeness in our lives, a want of poetic justice in our fates. It is chiefly on this side that religion touches on Ethics. But even the demand for intellectual explanation expresses a moral need. It is the desire to be at home within our universe, and not to be confronted at every turn with alien mysteries. In an unintelligible world we could not lead a moral life, because we should not know what ends to propose to ourselves, or how to set about realizing them.[1] Hence even when the imagination constructs myths to explain the formation of the clouds or the motion of the sun, it is indirectly serving morality. It saves us from that prosaic abandonment in which the higher life expires—that state in which, as Wordsworth complains, "Little we see in nature that is ours." Natural religions, like that of the Greeks, save us in some measure from this. They enable us in the presence of nature to

> "Have glimpses that may make us less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn."

Even here, then, the religious imagination comes to the aid of the moral life. Still, it is chiefly in so far as it supplies a relief from the inadequacy of the moral life itself that religion touches on Ethics. On this aspect we must now look a little more closely.

§ 4. THE FAILURE OF LIFE.—Those who fix their atten-

[1] It is chiefly for this reason that intellectual scepticism is apt to have a detrimental effect on the moral life. This effect was strongly insisted on by Plato, and, in more recent times, by Carlyle. Descartes also, in the pursuit of his intellectual scepticism, felt the need of guarding himself against its moral accompaniment. See his *Discourse on Method*, Part III. Burke also emphasized this point.

tion on the lives of individuals have always sufficient ground for Pessimism. Even the most favoured human beings attain only a small part of what they hope; and what they hope is generally but a small part of what they would wish to be able to hope. And a large proportion of the human race scarcely seem to get the length of hope at all. Nor is it merely that the average individual does not get so much out of life as he could wish. The apparent unfairness of fate is equally galling. Sometimes the sight of the wicked flourishing "like the green bay tree" offends the moral sense even more than the failures of the righteous; and this not from envy, but from a sense of injustice.

§ **5.** THE FAILURE OF SOCIETY.—Some consolation may be found, indeed, for the failure of the individual life in the confidence that society at least goes on advancing. But the progress of society can scarcely be regarded as compensating for individual failure. Society is not an entity apart from the individuals who compose it; and if the individuals fail, society cannot have wholly succeeded. It might be argued, indeed, that it is moving towards success, towards some "far-off divine event." Still no such event could be morally satisfactory if it were reached, so to speak, by trampling over the fallen bodies of generations of men who "all died not having received the promises."[1] And even the poor comfort that society advances, does not seem an altogether certain hope. In nearly all ages wise men have been inclined to think that they and their generation were no better than their fathers; and even if we can on the whole trace a line of progress through the lives of

[1] This point is strikingly emphasized in Prof. A. Seth's pamphlet on *The Present Position of the Philosophical Sciences*, near the end. *Cf.* also his *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 228. With much of what is said in both these places, however, I do not agree.

nations, "yet progress has many receding waves,"[1] and in nearly every case it seems to be followed in the end by a period of corruption and decline. And even such progress as there is, appears only to lead in an asymptotical way to the goal that we hope for. The highest civilizations that have ever been achieved, have been accompanied by corrupting luxury on the one hand and degrading toil and misery on the other; and there has never been a time at which the most deeply moral natures have not been made to feel that, in some important respects, the world was out of joint, and that neither they nor any others were born to set it right. Is there, it may well be asked, any sober and certain ground for supposing that it will ever be otherwise? If not, we must regard society as having failed, just as, for the most part, the individual life is perceived to fail.

§ 6. THE FAILURE OF ART.—Conscious of the failure of life and society, many of the finest natures have taken refuge in art. Matthew Arnold, in one of the most striking of his poems,[2] represents Goethe as turning from the vain strife of his age, after having exposed its weaknesses, and proclaiming to his contemporaries as their last resort—"Art still has truth, take refuge there." And indeed in the same poem Matthew Arnold describes the message of Wordsworth to his generation, though in very different language, as being yet substantially the same. Seeing the folly and confusion of the actual world around him, he taught his age to set it aside, and seek relief in feeling. But this is a somewhat treacherous refuge. "Art for Art's sake" is a shallow doctrine at the best.[3] It is true in a sense that art is play.

[1] Sorley's *Ethics of Naturalism*, p. 272.
[2] *Memorial Verses.*
[3] See Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetic*, p. 457.

Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst.[1] Men may seek a temporary relief in it from the struggle of life; and it may be a not unworthy commendation to say of a great poet—

> "The cloud of mortal destiny,
> Others will front it fearlessly—
> But who, like him, will put it by?"

But even this service can be rendered to us by art only so long as it is believed by us to be a revelation of a deeper truth in things.[2] If it is taken merely *as* art, merely as a beautiful dream, it sinks into play, becomes a mere refined amusement, and loses all its real power over the human spirit.[3] There could hardly be any worse sign of an age than that it regards art as a mere amusement, as a mere escape from the graver problems of life. In the great ages of art, there has always been a faith behind the art —a belief that it symbolizes truths that are eternal, and that can be expressed, though with an unspeakable loss of adequacy and completeness, in sober prose[4] as well as in the form of artistic dreams. Their art was, indeed, in a sense, play; but it was a playful mode of giving utterance to the exuberance of a nation's faith, and as such it had the highest beauty and value. But as a desperate escape from scepticism it could have no such worth. Its dreams, if they were supposed to be altogether unreal, would only

[1] "Life is serious, art is joyous."—Schiller. *Cf.* Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetic*, p. 296.

[2] On the relation of Beauty to Truth, see Caird's *Essays on Literature and Philosophy*, Vol. I., pp. 54—65, 151—154, &c.; and *cf.* Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetic*, pp. 336, 458—460, &c.

[3] "We cannot give the name of sacred poet to the 'idle singer of an empty day,' but only to him who can express the deepest and widest interests of human life."—Caird, *loc. cit.*, p. 154. *Cf.* also Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii., pp. 465-6.

[4] Dante actually gave a prose interpretation of his *Divine Comedy*.

make the emptiness of life the more conspicuous.[1] We might still feel that they were beautiful; but it would be like the beautifying of a sepulchre full of dead men's bones. The soul would have gone out of them.

§ 7. THE DEMAND FOR THE INFINITE.—"Man's Unhappiness," says Carlyle, "comes of his greatness. It is because there is an Infinite in him which with all his cunning he cannot quite bury under the finite." The ideal unity of our self-consciousness demands a perfectly harmonious and intelligible universe; and this cannot be found so long as we see the world in its finite aspect, as a series of isolated events set over against each other. Art partly breaks down this finitude, and lets us see the infinite significance of it shining through.[2] But it does this in a form that is not quite adequate to the truth—a form that is partly playful; and we return from its ideals to the actual world with all our discontent again—sometimes, indeed, with our discontent deepened and intensified. Art reaches its intuitions of truth, as Browning put it, "at first leap"; and often, when reflection supervenes, we find that what we have received

[1] Some suggestive remarks on the possibility of making art a substitute for religion will be found in Dühring's *Ersatz der Religion*, pp. 106—111. See also Caird's *Hegel*, pp. 37-8.

[2] Carlyle says (*Heroes and Hero-Worship*, Lect. III.) that music is "a kind of inarticulate unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the Infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into that." *Cf.* also Caird's *Hegel*, pp. 112—114; and see the passage quoted from Hegel in Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetic*, p. 361. "For in art we have to do with no mere toy of pleasure or of utility, but with the liberation of the mind from the content and forms of the finite, with the presence and union of the Absolute within the sensuous and phenomenal, and with an unfolding of truth which is not exhausted in the evolution of nature, but reveals itself in the world-history, of which it constitutes the most beautiful aspect and the best reward for the hard toil of reality and the tedious labours of knowledge."

is not a solution of our problems, but at most the suggestion of a solution. What we require is an ideal which shall at the same time be absolutely real.

§ 8.[1] THE TWO INFINITES.—Now there are two main forms in which we become aware of the infinite as a reality within our experience—what we may call the purely intellectual form and the moral form. These two are well expressed by Kant in a familiar passage, in which he states the two great objects of reverence.[2] "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: *the starry heavens above and the moral law within.* I have not to search for them and conjecture them as though they were veiled in darkness or were in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence. The former begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges my connection therein to an unbounded extent with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems. . . . The second begins from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity, but which is traceable only by the understanding, and with which I discern that I am not in a merely contingent but in a universal and necessary connection. . . . The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates as it were my importance as an *animal creature*, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one

[1] The substance of §§ 8—11 has already appeared in an article on "The Three Religions" in the *International Journal of Ethics* for January and April, 1892.

[2] Conclusion of *Critique of Practical Reason* (Abbott's translation), p. 260. *Cf.* also Janet's *Theory of Morals*, Book III., chap. xii., where the whole subject of the relation of Ethics to Religion is treated in a suggestive way.

knows not how, must again give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits (a mere speck in the universe). The second, on the contrary, infinitely elevates my worth as an *intelligence* by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent on animality and even on the whole sensible world, at least so far as may be inferred from the destination assigned to my existence by this law, a destination not restricted to conditions and limits of this life, but reaching into the infinite." These two reverences, separately or in combination, may be said to furnish the basis of religious worship. When the first is taken alone, it gives rise to Pantheism or to Agnosticism: when the second is taken alone, it gives rise to Monotheism or to the Religion of Humanity. When the two are combined, we have a more complete form of religion.

§ 9. THE FIRST RELIGION.—The first form of reverence, then, in which the demand for the infinite is recognized, is the worship of Nature in the boundlessness of its extent and power. In its crudest form this religion is summed up in the saying that "All is God." This form of worship rises very naturally in our minds when we are brought face to face with the great elemental forces of nature. "What is man," we are then tempted to exclaim, "that he should be put in comparison with the infinity of the material universe!" This point of view is materialistic, and is scarcely distinguishable from Atheism. It is, however, a superficial view. The infinity which is reached by the mere adding on of an endless number of parts is what Hegel called "the bad infinite." Such an infinity is in no way more satisfying to our minds than the finite is. The mere fact that we cannot get to an end of a thing does not add anything to its value. The blank emptiness of space, for instance, has no worth for us. The deeper Pantheism is distinguished

from this superficial one, in that its meaning is summed up, not in the saying that "All is God," but that "God is all" —*i. e.* that the finite world is an unreality, and that the ultimate reality is the spiritual power behind it. This view is developed, with great force and suggestiveness, in the *Ethics* of Spinoza. Since, however, it rests on the mere negative of the finite, it ends either in the assertion of blank nothingness as the ultimate reality (the Nirvana of the Buddhists), or in the assertion of some ultimate reality of which nothing can be known (the Unknowable of Mr. Herbert Spencer). This infinity of emptiness is in the end quite as unsatisfactory (both from an intellectual and from a moral point of view) as the infinity of an inexhaustible aggregate.

§ **10.** The Second Religion.—The second religion is the worship of the moral law in the absoluteness of its authority. In order, however, that this may be made an object of reverence, it requires to be regarded as embodied in some concrete form. The simplest form is that of a supreme Law-giver, as in the religion of the Jews. The unsatisfactoriness of this view arises from the fact that such a Law-giver has to be thought of as external to that to which he gives the law. He deals with a refractory material. He requires, therefore, to be thought of as in some sense finite,[1] being limited by a world outside. Accordingly, this view leads readily to Manicheism, the belief in an infinite Devil as well as an infinite God. Other methods of escape are (1) to say frankly, like J. S. Mill, that God is not infinite at all,[2] which deprives us of that supreme satisfaction which the infinite alone can give; or (2) to abandon the idea of a personal God, and assert only a progressive realization of

[1] In which case this view would become identical with Mill's.

[2] A similar view is developed in a recent book entitled *Riddles of the Sphinx.*

the moral ideal. This latter resource appears in the Religion of Humanity, instituted by Auguste Comte,[1] in which the human race as a whole is represented as a Great Being struggling forward against the opposing tendencies of an unintelligent and unintelligible nature. A similar view is to be found in Matthew Arnold's idea of a "Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." The inherent weakness of any such position is that it leaves an irreconcilable dualism in our world. Evil is left unaccounted for, and we have no assurance that it will be finally overcome with good.

§ **11.** THE THIRD RELIGION.—It is one of the supreme merits of the Christian religion that it combines these two infinites so completely. The God of Christianity is conceived at once as the infinite Power revealed in nature, and as the source and end of the moral ideal. It enables men to see in the world outside them the working out of their own moral aspirations,[2] to believe that "morality is the nature of things," and to have confidence, not indeed that "whatever is, is right," but that "whatever is right, is"—*i. e.*, as Carlyle put it, that "the soul of the world is just," that in the last resort "the Good" (in Plato's phrase) is the only reality. Other religions have partly contained this same inspiring faith; but Christianity seems to bring it out most clearly.

§ **12**. RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION.—It has been frequently noted that ages of religious faith tend to be rapidly followed by times of doubt and disbelief. The cause of this is not far to seek. The religious imagination, as we have

[1] For an account and criticism of this, see Caird's *Social Philosophy and Religion of Comte.*

[2] Beautifully expressed by Browning—*Epistle from Karshish*—

"So through the darkness comes a human voice,
Saying—'O heart I made, a heart beats here,'" &c.

already remarked, in its effort after a final explanation of the mysteries of things, outruns science. It cannot wait for the plodding processes of reasoning and verification. But these come afterwards; and when they come, they generally find that the kernel of religious truth has been hastily wrapped up in a husk of superstition. The religions of the world have grown out of the buoyant faith of some imaginative and impassioned natures. To the founders of them they have nearly always been an inextricable blending of truth and poetry.[1] Those who came after them have seldom been able to catch just that point of view at which insight passed into beauty. The poetry evaporates, and the truth does not remain. The happy intuition becomes a miserable creed; and the beautiful images that clustered round it turn into the spectres of superstition. Then, as soon as another man of real insight arises, the hollowness of the dogma is revealed, and with this revelation the entire religion appears to be exploded. The gods before which the rapt adoration of saint and poet once knelt become mere names that serve perhaps only to give gusto to an oath.

§ **13**. THE MORAL LIFE AS RELIGION.—The consciousness of the perishable character of religious beliefs has caused many of the most religious minds, especially in this century of ferment in which we live, to "swallow all formulas," and, avoiding any definite expression of a creed, to place their reliance simply upon the moral life itself, with all that it implies.[2] Conscious that they are not poets, or not poets

[1] *I. e.* their meaning takes the form of an image, which for them is inseparable from the meaning. As the Germans say, the *Begriff* (*i. e.* the conception or meaning) appears in the form of a *Vorstellung* (imaginative representation). *Cf.* Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, pp. 1—2, and lxxxvii—lxxxix.

[2] This seems to be, in the main, the attitude advocated by Prof. Giżycki in his *Introduction to the Study of Ethics*, chap. ix.

of sufficient power to be able to create a new embodiment for their religious convictions, they limit themselves to a belief that their moral ideals represent the deepest of all realities, and that whatever these demand, must in the last resort be true. A definite formulation of these ideals and of the demands that they bring with them may be left for some future Goethe to supply. This is substantially the attitude adopted (though with minor differences) by Carlyle and Emerson; and it is certainly an attitude which is not unwise.[1] The faith which it involves has perhaps never been better expressed than it was by Wordsworth in one of his sonnets, in which he contrasts the fleetingness of particular objects and particular embodiments of moral action with the eternal worth which we must ascribe to our moral natures themselves—

> "Still glides the stream, and shall forever glide;
> The Form remains, the Function never dies;
> While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
> We men, who in our morn of youth defied
> The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
> Enough if something from our hands have power
> To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
> And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
> Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
> We feel that we are greater than we know."

But this feeling and this faith, like all other feelings and faiths, must, if we are to cling to it with any assurance, be seen to have a rational foundation. Here it is, however, that Ethics is made aware of its powerlessness, and stretches out its hands to Metaphysics.

[1] This differs from Positivism, inasmuch as it does not deny the need of something deeper to rest on than the actual achievements of humanity; but merely avoids any definite formulation of the ideals which are postulated by the moral consciousness or of the faith which is involved in it.

Perhaps the shortest way in which we could sum up the nature of the faith here involved, would be to say that it is the faith that goodness is in the last resort at once the deepest truth and the highest beauty; or in other words, as already indicated in the preceding chapter, that Truth, Beauty, and Goodness are at bottom one and the same thing, viewed under different aspects. This appears to be the ultimate meaning of religious faith; and it seems clear that less than this could not satisfy our moral nature. The grounds on which such a faith might be maintained, have been partly suggested in the preceding chapter;[1] but a final justification of it could be given only by the working out of a complete metaphysical system.

[1] Non-metaphysical readers may find further suggestions of the way in which such a faith would be vindicated, by referring to such popular expositions as are to be found in Caird's *Hegel*, Jones's *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, Royce's *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, and, above all, Caird's *Evolution of Religion*. For some further remarks on religion, see Appendix B, Note VI.

APPENDIX A.

HINTS ON FURTHER READING.

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."—BACON.

THE chief function of such a handbook as this must be, like that of Goldsmith's village preacher, to "allure to brighter worlds and lead the way." The "brighter worlds" in this case are the works of the great masters of the science. To these frequent references have been given throughout this sketch; but it may be worth while now to make a few general remarks upon them, and to indicate the order in which they may be most profitably read. The precise order in which they should be taken will of course depend partly on individual taste, and partly on the amount of time at the student's disposal.

For the majority of readers, I believe that Mill's *Utilitarianism* will be found one of the most easy and interesting books to begin upon; and it will give a good general impression of the Hedonistic point of view. If thought desirable, the concluding chapter on Justice may be omitted on a first reading. The study of the whole book may be accompanied by a reference to the criticisms contained in Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*.

Portions of Kant ought also to be read at an early date. The student will soon find that modern Ethics, like modern Philosophy generally, turns largely upon him. The first two sections of the *Metaphysic of Morals* (to be found in Abbott's *Kant's Theory of Ethics*) will be found comparatively easy, even by students who have not read anything on Metaphysics, and will convey a fair understanding of Kant's general position:

but it is difficult to proceed far in Kant's ethical system without some knowledge of his metaphysical principles.[1]

The student who has mastered the general principles of Mill and Kant will have a fair idea of the bases of the Utilitarian and the Idealistic systems of morals. Those who wish to go more fully into the modern developments of these points of view must read Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics* and Green's *Prolegomena*. These are, I think, the two greatest books on Ethics that have been written in recent times. Of the two, Green's is the more difficult to understand, on account of his strongly metaphysical point of view. Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, however, will give the student great assistance in following the line of Green's argument.

Sidgwick's book has the advantage of supplying the student not only with the best statement of the modern Utilitarian point of view, but also with the best criticism of Intuitionism. For a statement of the Intuitionist point of view by one of its own adherents, reference may be made to Martineau's *Types of Ethical Theory*. An elementary student, however, would probably find this book somewhat confusing.

The chief books written from the Evolutionist point of view are Spencer's *Data of Ethics*,[2] Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, and Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*.[3] Each of these possesses special merits of its own. Mr. Alexander's book seems to me the most profound of the three; but for this very reason it may perhaps be the most difficult for an elementary student. Mr. Stephen's book, being by a man of letters, is written in remarkably clear and vigorous English, and will probably be found the most pleasant to read. It is also in some respects the most suggestive. Mr. Spencer's work has the advantage of forming part of a complete and comprehensive speculative system; and the way in which he connects Ethics with the various other departments of knowledge gives his book

[1] Those who are prepared to go fully into Kant's point of view will find invaluable aid in Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*.

[2] Now Part I. of *The Principles of Ethics*.

[3] Chapters v. and vi. in Darwin's *Descent of Man* may also be referred to. But the treatment of this subject there is slight and superficial.

a peculiar interest and stimulating power, especially perhaps for young students. Otherwise, it does not seem to me so satisfactory as the work of either of the other two.

While, however, the more recent books will naturally have a certain attraction for the student, he ought not to neglect the older masterpieces. Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Ethics* are still in many respects the greatest works on Ethics that we possess; and every serious student ought to read them at some point in his course. Spinoza's *Ethics* is a very difficult book, and can only be fully appreciated by an advanced student of Metaphysics.[1] The same remark is on the whole true of Hegel's *Philosophie des Rechts*—a very great book which has unfortunately never been translated. Some of the most important points in Hegel's system are, however, reproduced in a simple and interesting form in Dewey's *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics.*[2] Bradley's *Ethical Studies* also represents the Hegelian point of view; but this most interesting and stimulating work is unhappily out of print. Among other works of historical importance, which the student may profitably read, may be mentioned Butler's *Sermons* and *Dissertation II.* ("Of the Nature of Virtue"), Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature*, Books II. and III., or *Dissertation on the Passions* and *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Adam Smith's

[1] Students who desire to read Spinoza will derive great assistance from Principal Caird's excellent monograph in Blackwood's "Philosophical Classics." Those who read German will find his whole system expounded very fully and with extraordinary clearness and brilliancy in Kuno Fischer's *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, I. ii. For a shorter account, students may be referred to the article on "Cartesianism" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Spinoza, as a pure Determinist, and as one who wholly excludes the conception of ideals or of final causes, may be said to begin by denying the possibility of Ethics. He treats it as a positive or natural history science, not as a normative science. *Cf.* above, p. 141, *note*. But as he goes on with the development of his system, he is led, in spite of himself, to admit the conception of an ideal or end in human life, and even of a certain "immanent finality" in nature. This point is well brought out by Principal Caird (*op. cit.*, pp. 270, 304).

[2] Hegel's *Philosophy of History* (translated in Bohn's Series) will also be found very interesting.

Theory of Moral Sentiments, Bentham's *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Bacon's *De Augmentis*, Books VII. and VIII., and Hobbes's *Leviathan*.[1]

Many other useful books might be mentioned. Students who read German will find Paulsen's *System der Ethik*, Höffding's *Ethik*, Wundt's *Ethik*, Steinthal's *Allgemeine Ethik*, and Simmel's *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, of the greatest value. In French, the writings of Guyau and Fouillée will be found particularly suggestive: Simon's *Du Devoir* and Renouvier's *La Science Morale* may also be referred to. For Social Ethics Comte's *Politique Positive* is invaluable; and among more recent works, the writings of Le Play are especially important.[2] I may also mention Sorley's *Ethics of Naturalism*,[3] Fowler's *Progressive Morality*, Courtney's *Constructive Ethics*, Clifford's *Lectures and Essays* (containing some extremely suggestive points), Lotze's *Practical Philosophy*, Giżycki's *Introduction to the Study of Ethics*, Janet's *Theory of Morals*,[4] Royce's *Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, Rickaby's *Moral Philosophy*,[4] Edgeworth's *Mathematical Psychics* and *New and Old*

[1] A fairly complete list of important English works on Ethics, arranged according to schools, will be found at the end of Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*.

[2] For a summary of Comte's point of view, see Caird's *Social Philosophy and Religion of Comte*. For the history of social Ethics before Comte, reference may be made to Janet's *Histoire de la Science Politique;* also to the same writer's *Philosophie de la Révolution française, Saint-Simon et le Saint-Simonisme*, and *Les Origines du Socialisme contemporain*. See also Mohl's *Geschichte und Literatur der Staatswissenschaften*.

[3] Containing extremely valuable criticisms of the Utilitarian and Evolutionist schools.

[4] The work of Janet, and still more decidedly that of Rickaby, are closely connected with Catholic Theology. I may remark here that on certain aspects of Ethics Roman Catholic writers are frequently superior to Protestants. Their superiority is partly due to the close relationship of Catholic thought to the great work of Aristotle and to the often subtle distinctions of the Schoolmen; and partly to the direct way in which the Roman Catholic Church brings itself to bear on the moral life of the people.

Methods of Ethics, Clark Murray's *Introduction to Ethics*, Laurie's *Ethica*, Schurman's *Kantian Ethics*, Hodgson's *Theory of Practice*, Barratt's *Physical Ethics*, and Porter's *Elements of Moral Science*. In the History of Ethics, in addition to Sidgwick's *History of Ethics* and to the short statements contained in General Histories of Philosophy (*e. g.* Erdmann's, Zeller's, and Kuno Fischer's), reference may be made to Lecky's *History of European Morals*, to Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, and (for readers of German) to Jodl's *Geschichte der Ethik*. C. M. Williams's recent work on *Evolutional Ethics* will be found useful with reference to that particular school. Information on some points of detail will also be found in Professor Bain's works on *Mental and Moral Science*, and on *The Emotions and the Will*, and in Professor Calderwood's *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*. Notices of current literature on the subject, as well as discussions on particular points, will be found from time to time in the pages of *Mind*, of the *Philosophical Review*, and of the *International Journal of Ethics*.[1]

[1] Since the above was written, Professor Sterrett has edited *The Ethics of Hegel* in English; and two valuable contributions have been made to Applied Ethics—*viz. The Civilization of Christendom* by Mr. Bosanquet, and *Short Studies in Character* by Mrs. Bryant. The former of these deals mainly with aspects of social progress: the latter is specially useful for its treatment of questions with regard to moral education.

APPENDIX B.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

NOTE I.—ON ETHICS AS A SCIENCE.

IT ought to be observed that the general view of the nature of ethical science taken in this volume is not one that commends itself to all writers on the subject. Several influential writers hold that Ethics ought to be regarded as being concerned simply with a survey of the facts of the moral life (including of course the immoral life), on the one hand, and, on the other hand, with an analysis of the moral consciousness. It would thus be, on the one side, a branch of History and Sociology; while, on the other side, it would be a department of Psychology and Metaphysics.[1] Treated in this way, Ethics would of course have no practical bearing. It would be a purely theoretical science, or series of sciences. It appears, indeed, to be partly on this account that the view of Ethics now referred to has commended itself to so many writers on the subject. It is thought that no science ought to be treated as having a practical bearing. Certainly much confusion has arisen from supposing that it is the business of purely theoretical studies to lay down practical precepts. One of the most recent and striking examples of such a confusion is to be found in the study of Political Economy; and, accordingly, we now find such a writer as Professor

[1] The most emphatic and consistent upholder of this view is Dr. Georg Simmel. See his *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft* throughout, especially Vol. I., p. III. A similar view, however, seems to be implied in some of the statements of Mr. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, pp. 174-5. For some criticisms on these statements I may refer to the *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. III., no. 4, pp. 507 *sqq.* *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. IV., no. 3, pp. 160—173.

Marshall insisting[1] that "in every practical problem common sense is the ultimate arbiter. . . It is not the function of any science to lay down practical precepts or to prescribe rules of life." And certainly, if Ethics is to be treated simply as a particular science, like Political Economy or Geology, this remark would apply to it as well as to any other science. The student of the facts of the moral life—*e.g.* the criminologist—is certainly not called upon to lay down practical principles, any more than is the student of political, commercial, or artistic history. In all such cases "the teaching of history" may be expected to throw some light on practical problems; but it would be most misleading to make any direct application of such light to the guidance of practical affairs. Similarly, the student of the psychology of the moral consciousness—*i. e.* of the development of desire and will and other elements in the moral life—does not aim at any direct application of his results to practice. Hence, if we understand Ethics to be simply a collection of such psychological and historical truths, it would not be a practical science, any more than pure deductive economics or economic history. But if Ethics were to be regarded in this way, there would be a certain absurdity in treating it as a separate subject at all.[2] If it involves a somewhat violent abstraction to treat economic history apart from the other aspects of human development, it would be still more violent in the case of moral history. An attempt to treat morals in this way would almost inevitably lead to a narrow view of what the moral life is to be taken as including. *All* history is moral history; for it is all an account of human activity in the pursuit of ends. Similarly, it would be a

[1] *Principles of Economics*, Vol. I., p. 83. As a matter of fact, however, economists have from the first supplied direct guidance to practical life. This guidance was no doubt partly mischievous, because not enough account was taken of sides of life other than the purely economic. It is the business of Ethics to take a more comprehensive view of the end to be aimed at.

[2] This is admitted by Dr. Simmel. See *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, Vol. I., p. III. Mr. Bradley also confesses to a dislike of Moral Philosophy, which is natural on his theory. See, for instance, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 436.

violent abstraction to separate the psychology of desire and will from the psychology of the other elements in our mental life. If Ethics could not be anything but a hotch-potch of psychology and history, it would probably be better to abolish the subject altogether. Treated in this abstract way, the psychology would be sure to be superficial and the history inaccurate. The element which is peculiar to Ethics, and which alone seems to justify its study as a separate department of knowledge, is the presence in it of the conception of an absolute end or ideal in human life. The *growth* of such a conception may, indeed, be treated by psychology; but it is not the business of psychology to consider its *validity*. Metaphysics, no doubt, may deal with this question; and I confess I do not see how Ethics can be finally separated from Metaphysics. But, seeing that Metaphysics has to deal with the fundamental principles of *all* sciences, the fact that it deals with Ethics among others need not invalidate the claim of the latter to a certain independence. Now if Ethics is to be regarded, as I have regarded it, as being concerned with the final end or ideal of human activity, then the distinction between theory and practice must to a large extent be broken down. The end or ideal is the stimulating and guiding principle in practice; and to understand it is to understand how practice may be stimulated and guided. It is true that, even so, Ethics will not tell us what in particular we are to do. "Common sense" must still be the "ultimate arbiter" on this point. For our action in any particular case will depend not merely on our understanding of the final end or ideal, but also on our understanding of the relation of our particular circumstances to that end. If Ethics could instruct us about this, the time would be ripe for conducting life by machinery. Happily we have not got so far as that; and hence the art of conduct remains distinct from the science of the ideal. Otherwise life would come to an end; just as thought would come to an end, if the particulars of experience could be evolved analytically out of our inner consciousness. Yet just as it is true that we interpret experience by means of conceptions which are not merely empirical; so it is true that we judge conduct by means of an ideal which is not merely empirical. To understand this ideal, therefore, is to clarify the moral

judgment, and is in that sense practical. It is not to tell us what in particular we are to do; it is not even to furnish us with definite rules to be applied in particular cases. But assuredly it is to enlighten us with respect to the principles by which common sense is to be guided in its practical judgments. Common Sense is not an oracle. It is guided by principles which, as mere common sense, it does not understand. And so long as it does not understand its principles it is blind and blundering. It is the business of Ethics to enlighten and guide common sense, to bring its underlying principles to clear consciousness, to criticise them and see exactly within what limits they are valid.[1]

NOTE II.—ON THE MEANING OF "OUGHT."

THE question discussed in the preceding Note is closely connected with the question whether Ethics should be regarded as being concerned with what "ought to be" or with what "is." To some extent, indeed, this question is answered when it is pointed out that Ethics is concerned with an end or ideal, not with historical or psychological facts. But the question is complicated by an ambiguity in the word "is." Most of those who have sought to get rid of the "ought" in Ethics have meant that it is impossible to define any ultimate end or ideal for human action, and that we must content ourselves with the psychological fact that men seek this or that particular end (*e.g.* pleasure), or with the historical fact that men act in this or that particular way. It is in this sense that the "ought" is excluded by Bentham[2] and by Simmel.[3] They reduce the

[1] There is an excellent discussion by Professor Dewey on the bearing of moral theory on practice in the *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. I., No. 2. His treatment, however, seems to me to be partly vitiated by a certain want of clearness in the explanation of what is meant by "ought." See following Note. Some good remarks on moral theory and practice will also be found in Fouillée's *Education from a National Standpoint*, pp. 206-8.

[2] *Cf.* above, chap. vi., § 6, Note.

[3] Simmel explains (*Moralwissenschaft*, I., pp. 33, 57, II., p. 310, etc.) that the "ought" is on one side a mode of willing, on the other side a weakened form of "must." On both sides it is simply an "is."

"ought to be" to a merely empirical "is." It is in quite a different sense that Hegel insists[1] on the fact that every "ought to be" must rest on an "is." In fact, it is in the opposite sense. Hegel does not mean that we cannot define an ideal, but rather that the ideal is that which alone has any ultimate reality. To maintain this, however, is to pass over into the sphere of religion and metaphysics. From the religious point of view it is no doubt necessary to maintain that whatever ought to be must be; and indeed even from the ethical point of view the "ought to be" seems unintelligible except as an expression of the deeper meaning of reality. This I have endeavoured to bring out in the course of my treatment. To say this, however, is not to deny the fact that Ethics deals with an "ought." To explain an ideal is not to explain it away. However true it may be that the ideal of the moral life is the deepest of realities, it is still certain that the moral life is a process, a pursuit, a struggle. Some metaphysicians may hold (with Bradley) that on this account the moral life is mere appearance, not reality. Others may hold (with Hegel) that it is of the essence of reality to be a process. The latter view appears to me to be the more correct; but whichever view we take, Ethics remains the same. If the pursuit of an ideal is mere appearance, still Ethics is the science which deals with that appearance. If, on the other hand, reality consists in the pursuit of an ideal, reality involves an "ought." In either case Ethics is concerned with what "ought to be."[2]

[1] See, for instance, Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, p. 8.

[2] Professor Dewey is one of the most notable of those writers in recent times who have sought to explain away the "ought" in Ethics. Thus he says (*Outlines of Ethics*, p. 1) that we must not suppose "that it belongs to Ethics to prescribe what a man ought to do." Now we have seen that there is a sense in which this is true. Ethics cannot deal with the particular. But apparently Professor Dewey means more than this. He explains (*International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. I., No. 2, pp. 198, 201) that the "ought" is simply *the "is" of action*. In a sense this is of course true. The "ought" is an "is to be"; but it is an "is to be" that may be frustrated. This seems to be rather ignored by Professor Dewey. In the main, however, his point appears to be simply that of Hegel. *Cf.* also his *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 174 *sqq*.

It may be noted, in this connection, that the word "ought" is directly connected with "owe." What we "ought to do" means primarily what we *owe*, or what is due from us to some person, or to the social system to which we belong. Regarded in this way, the close connection between what "ought to be" and what "is" becomes apparent. Our obligations to the social system depend directly on the nature of that system. It must be remembered, however, that a man sometimes feels it to be his duty to try to *reform* or even *revolutionise* the social system to which he belongs. It is in such circumstances that the "ought" appears to be divorced from what "is." But even in such a case what a man ought to do depends on a general consideration of what human nature *is*, and what the nature of a human society *is*. We see then, generally, that the "ought" rests upon an "is," but is not resolvable into a mere "is," since it involves the presentation of an ideal.

NOTE III.—ON AN ACT OF WILL.

THOUGH an analysis of the elements involved in an act of will belongs more properly to Psychology than to Ethics, yet it seems desirable to add at this point a somewhat more definite summing up of the important factors than is to be found in Chapter V. A definite illustration may help to make the subject clear. Take the case of the desire of food. The first element involved in this is the mere animal *appetite*. This we may suppose to be at first a mere blind impulse analogous to the organic impulse by which a flower turns to the light; but it is distinguished from such a vegetable impulse by the presence of consciousness. In this consciousness there are two main elements—the ideal presentation, in vague outline, of the object striven towards, and a feeling of pleasure and pain. The latter feeling is twofold: there is a sense of pleasure in the anticipated satisfaction, and a sense of uneasiness connected with the consciousness of its absence. Thus in the appetite of hunger there is a peculiar craving, partly pleasant and partly uneasy, accompanied by a more or less vague consciousness of the kind of object that would yield satisfaction. *Desire* is distinguished from mere appetite by the definite presence of a consciousness

of the object as an end to be aimed at. The appetite of hunger involves a vague uneasiness, a vague consciousness of the kind of object that would remove the uneasiness, a vague anticipation of pleasure in its attainment. Desire of food, on the other hand, is a definite presentation of the idea of food as an end to be sought. In this presentation, as in the more vague presentation of the object in appetite, there is also involved an element of pleasure and pain. The object thus definitely presented as an end in desire is what is most properly understood by a *motive*.[1] Such motives may conflict: the ends involved may be incompatible with one another. Hence the desires governed by these motives may remain in abeyance. The object presented as a desirable end may not be definitely chosen as an end—*i. e.* it may not become a *wish*. A wish is a desire selected. It is a desire with which we have identified ourselves; *i. e.* it is one which forms part of our present dominant "universe." The wish for food is more than the mere desire for food. It is a concentrated desire. But even this is still not an act of will. An act of will involves, besides, a definite *purpose* or *intention*; *i. e.* in an act of will we do not merely concentrate our attention on an end as a good to be sought; but, in addition, we regard it as an end to be brought about by us. The purpose of procuring food—the intention, for instance, of working for a livelihood—is more than the mere wish for food, more than a mere prayer or

[1] This is not the view of "motive" adopted by all ethical writers. See the discussions in the *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. IV., Nos. 1 and 2. Mr. Ritchie maintains there (p. 236) that "'desire' is the genus of which 'motive' is a species. The differentia of 'motive' is the presence of a conception of an end." But surely this must be erroneous. Surely *all* desire involves a conception of an end. It is right to add that the term "motive" seems originally to have been used for any efficient cause of movement. It appears to be used in this way in Shakspere's description of Cressida—

> "Her wanton spirits look out
> At every joint and motive of her body."

Cf. Johnson's *Dictionary*, *sub voce* "Motive." But here, as in so many other cases, the meaning of the word has been gradually modified, partly to suit the conveniences of ordinary life, and partly to meet the requirements of science.

aspiration. *Will*, however, involves, further, an actual energising. A purpose or intention refers to the future, and may not be carried out. In an act of will the idea becomes a force. How this is done is a difficult question to answer; and, happily, it is not a problem that we require here to solve. We have merely to notice this element of active energising as involved in an Act of Will. The man who wills to procure food does not merely intend to work, but actually does exert himself. Finally, *character* is a formed habit—*e.g.* the habit of activity in some particular industrial pursuit.

NOTE IV.—ON SELF-ASSERTION AND SELF-DENIAL.

IT seems desirable to add a few words here to what has already been said on the subject of Egoism and Altruism. We have partly seen that the distinction implied in these terms is an unreal one. It is untrue, to begin with, to represent our natural impulses as partly self-regarding, and partly other-regarding.[1] It is much truer to say that our impulses are naturally or originally neither self-regarding nor other-regarding; but rather that, as Butler explained,[2] they are primarily "disinterested" and "rest in their objects," or "terminate upon" them. Self-love and Benevolence are both of later growth. Further, in the mature life of humanity, when mere appetites have become developed into definite desires, and when we have become definitely conscious both of ourselves and of others, it is still not quite correct to say that our desires are partly self-regarding and partly other-regarding. Our desires never, so to speak, rest within self. They always involve an interest in objects. And these objects nearly always belong to a social universe, and imply a certain interest in other human beings. Ambition, for instance, which is generally regarded as a purely selfish passion, would die out completely if a man were to lose all interest in his fellow-men. Even hate, as Carlyle said, is only "inverted love," and still implies a

[1] Readers of German will find an interesting discussion on this subject in Simmel's *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, chap. ii.

[2] See the Preface to the *Sermons*, and Sermons XI., XII., XIII.

certain interest in the person hated. There is thus a sense in which none of our desires is purely self-regarding. But, on the other hand, all our desires are self-regarding. There is a sense in which all love is self-love, all reverence self-reverence, all interest self-interest. In order to understand this, it is necessary to bear in mind the important distinction, which has been so admirably emphasized by Professor James,[1] between the "I" and the "Me," *i. e.* between the Self as Subject and the Self as Object. All my interests are *my* interests. They all fall within my circle or world. They are all in my "I," and in that sense are all selfish. Within this "I," on the other hand, within the circle of my interests, lies the distinction between "me," "you," "it," and so forth. The "me" refers primarily to my bodily nature, with its particular sensations; but its meaning becomes extended, so as to include the whole individual self as one person among others. This self is one of many objects, in which we may be more or less interested; and selfishness means properly an exclusive interest in this one particular object, this "me." Our interests, then, we may say, are all in the "I," but not all in the "me." Now it is with reference to the "me" and the "you" that Egoism and Altruism have significance. But with reference to this we may confidently say that there is hardly ever any interest that is purely the one or purely the other. Even the most selfish of men are interested in outside objects; and it is for the sake of these, not for the sake of the mere *me*, that they unduly neglect other people. And even the most self-forgetful (*i. e. me*-forgetful) of men are not simply interested in *yous*. Love is not the love of a mere *other*, a mere object among other objects. It is the love of a concrete personality, involving innumerable connections and suggestions. In its highest form it says to its object, as Tennyson to Hallam,

"Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee."

As referred, then, to the "me" and the "you," the opposition

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I., chap. x. Professor James's whole treatment of this subject is most excellent.

between Egoism and Altruism will not hold. On the other hand, as referred to the "I," all our interests are egoistic. The "I" is always the centre of our world: it can never become "thou." The most self-forgetting love is love of something within my world: and this world may be a narrow and exclusive one. Hence love has even been defined as "selfishness for two." But it would be equally true to say that selfishness is benevolence for one. All our interests, wide or narrow, are interests in objects that are for the self, that fall within our particular universe. Even the widest love—the love, say, of a Shakspere or Christ—is limited to the circle of the particular interests of the self that loves. All interest, then, is in this sense self-interest; and no distinction can be drawn here between Egoism and Altruism.

Nevertheless, when all this has been said, there remains still a very real distinction between self-assertion and self-denial. The point of this distinction lies in the contrast between wider and narrower universes. If our universe were a rigid and constant circle, there would be no such distinction. But in reality it is a fluctuating and elastic sphere, capable of indefinite expansion. We live on the whole within a certain circle of interests, with which we are particularly identified; but our interests are not rigidly confined within that circle. Thus the artist or man of science may have one absorbing pursuit, to which all the best of his life is devoted; but he does not altogether cease to be aware of other human interests beyond. Now it is here that the possibility arises of a conflict between self-assertion and self-denial.[1] Self-assertion means devotion to that circle of interests with which we have specially identified ourselves. Self-denial means the renunciation of this with a view to some other circle in which our interest is less keen. For instance, we may deny ourselves with a view to the good of the particular social universe to which we belong—our city or country. The self which we thus deny may be either narrower or wider than that for the sake of which it is denied; or it may be simply different. A man may be chiefly interested in the perfection of his own work; and if he renounces this for the

[1] There is a very admirable discussion of this conflict in Mr. Bradley's recent work, *Appearance and Reality*, chap. xxv.

sake of the good of his whole community, he is renouncing a narrower universe for the sake of a greater. On the other hand, a man, such as Goethe, may have large interests in art or science, going far beyond anything embodied in his actual social universe; and if he were to sacrifice these, he would be to some extent sacrificing a wider universe for the sake of a narrower. Finally, a man may sacrifice his own particular interests for the sake of another's interests, and may in this way simply sacrifice one universe for the sake of a different one. In this sense, then, there is a real opposition between self-development and self-surrender; and it may naturally be asked whether we ought to aim simply at the development of our own particular world, or at the perfection of some wider universe to which it is necessary to surrender our particular interests.

Now with regard to this question it must be noted at once that it does not really introduce any difficulty into the conception of our ultimate ideal.[1] Our ultimate ideal is the realization of a completely rational universe. This would involve complete self-assertion; since it is only in such a universe that the real self could be realised. Yet at the same time it would involve complete self-denial, in the sense of the renunciation of all narrower interests that are incompatible with that perfect whole. But this truth does not in any way abolish the purely *practical* difficulty of a conflict between different universes in our actual life, so long as the rational universe is not fully realised. With reference, however, to this practical difficulty, no complete solution is to be expected from ethical science. It belongs to the art of Conduct, for which, as has been already stated, ethical science cannot furnish any complete guidance. It is a question for individual tact and insight to determine how far it is important to develop any particular universe, and how far it is desirable to sacrifice it; how far, for instance, a man may devote himself to art or to metaphysics, and how far he ought to sacrifice these for the sake of social reform or "philanthropic" endeavours. The answer depends on the need of the moment, on individual aptitude, on the probability of results, and on

[1] Hence Mr. Bradley's treatment of this subject, in the passage referred to above, seems to me to be partly erroneous.

hundreds of particular considerations with which no science can deal. All that Ethics can say is that, since all such universes are incomplete and only relatively valuable, the choice must in general be, in Aristotle's phrase, that of a "mean." But the mean is a "relative mean," different for different people and for different times; and it can only be determined, as Aristotle again put it,[1] by "the sensible man," not by science. We can easily see that certain forms of action are not in the proper mean. It is fairly obvious that it is wrong for any average man to devote himself entirely to an abstract science without regard to politics or social improvement. Whether it is wrong for a scientific genius with limited energies is not so obvious. So, too, it is obvious that it would be wrong for a great poet or philosopher to dissipate his energies in so-called philanthropic work. Whether it would be equally wrong for a mediocre poet or philosopher is not so obvious. It is in the determination of such questions that practical wisdom lies; and though the consideration of our ultimate end helps us to decide upon them, yet it cannot furnish us with any direct answer.[2]

NOTE V.—ON CONSCIENCE.

IT may be well at this point to sum up the views with regard to Conscience which are scattered in various parts of this Manual.[3] We have to note, in the first place, the important

[1] *Ἔστιν ἄρα ἡ ἀρετὴ ἕξις προαιρετική, ἐν μεσότητι οὖσα τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὡρισμένη λόγῳ καὶ ὡς ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὁρίσειεν.* "Virtue, then, is a habit of deliberate choice, the characteristic of which lies in observing the mean relatively to the persons concerned; a choice which is determined by reason and in the way in which a sensible man would determine it." This seems to mean that the choice is guided by scientific considerations, but that the ultimate decision must be left to the good sense of the individual.

[2] On the practical difficulties involved in the opposition between self-assertion and self-denial, reference may be made to Mrs. Bryant's excellent article on "Self-Development and Self-Surrender," *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. III., No. 3.

[3] See the Index at the end of the volume for references to the various points at which Conscience is dealt with.

distinction between the side of *judgment* and the side of *feeling* in Conscience. When we speak of the "voice of conscience," we are thinking primarily of the system of our moral judgments. On the other hand, we speak also of the "pain" of conscience, the "sting" of conscience, and the like. Here we refer to the feeling which accompanies our moral judgments. In the second place, if we regard Conscience as meaning primarily the system of our moral judgments, we have to distinguish between the individual conscience and the social conscience; *i. e.* we have to distinguish between the system of moral judgments to which a particular individual has become habituated and the system of moral judgments which is formed in the course of the development of human society. The judgments of the individual are dependent on those of the social universe to which he belongs; but in the case of any particular individual there is a certain "personal equation" to be allowed for. Again, whether we are dealing with an individual or with society as a whole, we have to distinguish between the temporary conscience and the more abiding one. In the case of the individual we may appeal "from Philip drunk to Philip sober," from the judgment hastily formed under the influence of passion or accidental local and temporal colouring, and the judgment corresponding to the more or less permanent formed character of the individual. Similarly, in the case of human society as a whole, we may distinguish the moral judgments of particular periods and countries, more or less distorted by special conditions, and by what we are accustomed to call the "accidents" of development, from the more permanent moral judgments based on reason, to which the judgments of particular times and countries—as well as those of particular individuals within those times and countries—are only rough approximations. Finally, it is of some use to distinguish between Conscience and *quasi*-Conscience; *i. e.* between judgments based on genuine moral ideals, whether those of an individual or of a society, whether relatively of a temporary or of a permanent character, and those judgments which are based on lower ideals—mere ideals of good manners, "good form," and the like. With the judgments of *quasi*-Conscience, as with those of Conscience proper, there is a characteristic accompanying pain. In the case of *quasi*-Conscience there is also a

characteristic pleasure when the ideal is realised. In the case of Conscience proper it is doubtful whether there is any such pleasure; since here the ideal can hardly be attained, and if any individual did attain it, he would attain it only by a devotion to objective ends which would exclude the possibility of any feeling of self-satisfaction. This, however, is a doubtful point. Ordinary common-sense seems to recognise pleasures of conscience as well as pains.[1]

NOTE VI.—ON ART AND RELIGION.

IT must be obvious to every reader that in the latter half of this Manual, even more notably than in the earlier chapters, the treatment is necessarily cramped from lack of sufficient space for discussion. This is perhaps truer of the last two chapters than of any other part of the book. The relation of Art and Religion to Ethics is a complicated subject, and belongs on the whole rather to the province of writers on Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Religion than to writers on Ethics. I have merely thought it desirable to indicate in the briefest possible way how these subjects touch on one another. To prevent misunderstanding, however, there are one or two points on which it may be well to add a few words here.

What I have wished to emphasize throughout is the ultimate unity of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. At the same time I have sought to show that in none of the forms of actual human consciousness is the unity of these fully realized. This point has perhaps not been made sufficiently clear. The reason of this want of clearness is partly that I have not brought out with sufficient distinctness the closeness of the relation between morality and religion. For though it is true, as I have urged,

[1] It is perhaps worth while to add that in English, as in French, "Conscience" meant originally *consciousness*. It is in this sense that Milton says, referring to the loss of his eyes—

> "What supports me dost thou ask?
> The *conscience*, Friend, to have lost them overplied
> In liberty's defence, my noble task,
> Of which all Europe rings from side to side."

that there are forms of religion in which this relationship is not explicit, yet on the whole the real significance of the religious consciousness must be judged by the highest forms in which it appears,[1] and in these highest forms the relationship between morality and religion is apparent. Religion, in fact, might be defined as meaning, in its ultimate development, the faith that the highest goodness is inseparable from the deepest truth and the most perfect beauty. Religion starts, as it were, from the moral ideal, and connects this with truth and beauty. In this way it is contrasted with poetry and philosophy. The highest poetry starts from the beautiful and regards this as the expression of what is best and truest; while the highest philosophy seeks to show that the deepest truth involves beauty and goodness. Thus, none of the three completely attains the unity which is sought. Of philosophy it remains true to the last that it is a painting of grey in grey.[2] The feeling and the will remain external to it. Poetry, again, satisfies the heart, but leaves the moral problem unsolved; and, in spite of its fine intuitions of truth, we turn back from it to the realities of life with an exclamation like that of Keats—

> "Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
> Fled is that music: Do I wake or sleep?"[3]

So also even the highest religion remains a faith in the moral ideal. It is not knowledge, and it is not poetry. The unity of truth, beauty, and goodness is present in religion, in poetry, and in philosophy; but they approach it from different sides, and no one of them grasps it fully.[4]

[1] This point is strikingly emphasised in Caird's *Evolution of Religion.* See especially Vol. I., chap. ii., p. 40.

[2] "Grau, theurer Freund, ist alle Theorie."

[3] *Cf.* Browning's Epilogue to *Ferishtah's Fancies*—

> "Only at heart's utmost joy and triumph, terror
> Sudden turns the blood to ice: a chill wind disencharms
> All the late enchantment! *What if all be error?*"

[4] Further remarks on Art and Ethics will be found in Guyau's *L'Art au point de vue sociologique.* On the connection between truth and beauty there are some good remarks in Fouillée's *Education from a National Standpoint,* p. 36. See also Bradley's *Appearance and Reality,* chaps. xxv. and xxvi.

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(*N.B. This Index does not contain any references to the Appendices.*)

THE END.